



Project supported by
The Slave Route



Places of Memory

The Experiences and Contributions of the Enslaved Africans in St. Kitts and Nevis



Produced by the St.Kitts and Nevis National Commission for UNESCO



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



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Introduction

The history of St. Kitts and Nevis is very rich. The landscape is dotted with sites where significant events in the lives of our enslaved ancestors occurred. On these sites are ruins of structures that bear evidence of the productivity and skill of the enslaved Africans. This text refers to these sites as Places of Memory. More specifically, places of memory associated with the experiences and contributions of the enslaved Africans that lived on St. Kitts and Nevis. This concept gave inspiration for the title of the text book. Places of memory can be found in every one of the fourteen parishes in St. Kitts and Nevis.

The essential mandate of the UNESCO Slave Route Committee was to produce a text book referencing twenty to thirty sites related to the enslaved Africans on St. Kitts and Nevis. Owing to the large number of sites and the rich history of these two islands, a massive challenge was to stick to the quota of sites and resist the temptation to include the scores of other sites.

Another challenge was to structure and present the content of this pioneering text book in a manner that is easy to read, relevant to students at all levels, and inspiring to all Kittitians and Nevisians who read it. To establish the basic approach to the writing of this text, and to better appraise the places of memory related to slavery on St. Kitts and Nevis, I followed the model used by the global Slave Route Project: “Revealing history through Geography”. This approach compelled me to move from parish to parish on both islands. The experience was very profound and rewarding as places of memory associated with our enslaved ancestors began, as it were, to reveal themselves to me. There were so many places of memory in each parish on both islands that it was difficult to restrict the text to the mandated limit of twenty to thirty sites.

The final list of places of memory was ultimately chosen based on four themes which underscored the significance of each place of memory. These themes were: ‘Adaptation and Survival’; ‘Resistance and Revolt’; ‘Human Rights’; and ‘Contribution and Productivity’. These themes divide the text into four sections or units. Each theme, unit, or section consists of relevant places of memory. Each place of memory is presented in an easy-to-read and easy-to-understand structure. First, the place of memory is named and its location given. This is then followed by a relatively large pictorial representation of the place of memory. Immediately following this visual aid is a brief description of the place of memory. After the brief description, the significance of the place of memory is presented. Finally, a more detailed account of each place of memory follows, and addresses each theme in the order they are outlined, in bullet form.

‘Places of Memory’ is written in fairly simple language and the information is presented in a comprehensible way. This was deliberate. As an educator, I strongly believe that even the weakest reader should benefit from being exposed to the material in this text. While some may criticize and say this format as being repetitious, the rationale is that repetition aids memory and helps the weakest readers understand. It is their history too. Besides, if the text is simple enough for the weakest reader to read and comprehend, then the text would be beneficial to more persons.

‘Places of Memory’ serves as part of the process of addressing the issue of lack of knowledge of local history by our students and, by extension, the greater part of the populace. Many students

are graduating from secondary school with distinctions in History. However, the same students often lack sufficient awareness of their own local history – their heritage. It is cause for concern when a visitor from a cruise vessel can take a four hour island tour and then leave our shores at the end of the day with a greater sense of awareness of the history of our two islands than do the majority of our populace. This text book should serve as an important resource to start the process of educating our youths, in particular about our local history.

Another purpose that this text book hopes to fulfil is providing students with specific local content that is relevant to their secondary school History syllabus, and their primary school Social Studies curriculum. Presently, all of the history text books used in our schools have content with examples and places of reference specific to other islands. Our students would be greatly assisted with local historical content relevant to the themes they have to study to complete their history syllabus. It is hoped that the students will get a greater sense of attachment and belonging to the history, their history, with local content which these same students can find in their own backyards and in their own parishes. This local history textbook will therefore supplement the existing traditional history textbooks by providing concrete examples of places of memory related to the themes mentioned earlier. Similarly, teachers of primary schools will be able to use this text as a resource to expose their pupils to their rich history – the rich history of St. Kitts and Nevis.

The four themes are not only relevant to the global Slave Route Project, but also to the current themes of the CSEC (CXC) History syllabus. Students and teachers can therefore use this text as a supportive resource. Teachers of both primary and secondary schools would now be encouraged to take the students out of the classroom on field trips to these places of memory. The textbook includes places of memory in each parish. Therefore, teachers and students could plan field trips for the duration of the lesson in their own parish, or engage in field trips of longer duration around the island, depending on the nature and scope of the lesson or project.



Foreword

The Saint Christopher National Trust is pleased to be associated with this pioneering venture. We commend the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) National Commission for this fact-filled publication which should serve to empower our people of all ages, but especially our young people, to own our heritage by learning about our ‘places of memory’.

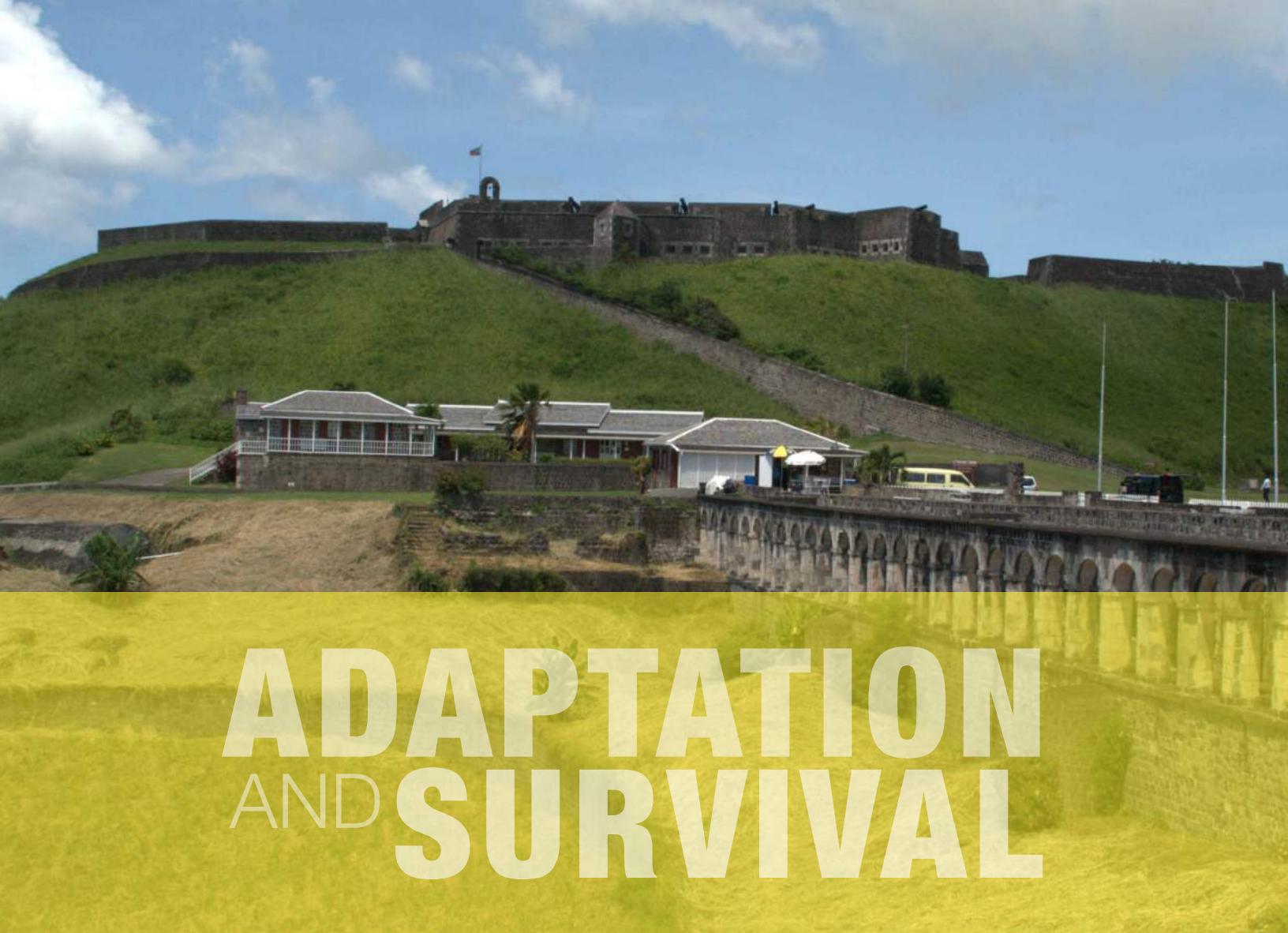
This seminal work must serve to fill the void in so far as historical information and sensitization is concerned. We must know where we have come from, we must treasure the contributions of our ancestors and especially those of the enslaved people who struggled under overwhelming odds and triumphed in so many ways. Places of memory must represent those locations, buildings and other artifacts which educated us as to actions, aspirations and traditions of the enslaved people for themselves and their children.

Today, we marvel at their construction and engineering feats and skills at such monuments as The Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park, a world acclaimed historical site, and the windmills and stoneworks which dot our landscape. We must protect these sites from ever-present predators both local and foreign, who have no sense or value of history or heritage and seek to deprive generations yet unborn of these valuable assets. Vigilance and enforcement of the law must become our watchwords.

So many of us have had moments which so stirred our consciousness that we became lovers of history and heritage. Mine came through enlightened tutoring at the St. Kitts-Nevis Grammar School when History became a living subject to be researched and treasured and for a riveting story to be unfolded. Later, following the acquisition of all of the Sugar Estates lands in effecting the transfer of these lands to the State, and encountered the legal documents of ownership which recount a story of our villages, their origin, the struggles and pain of a landless people. The holdings of the St. Christopher Heritage Society, now the Saint Christopher National Trust, also record for all time tales of our elders which should serve to inspire us and place our villages in today’s context.

So as we explore and give due recognition to these treasured places of memory, let us reflect on our past, let us honour our forefathers and build this nation of ours as a true Land of Beauty!

S.W. Tapley Seaton, C.V.O., Q.C
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ADAPTATION AND SURVIVAL



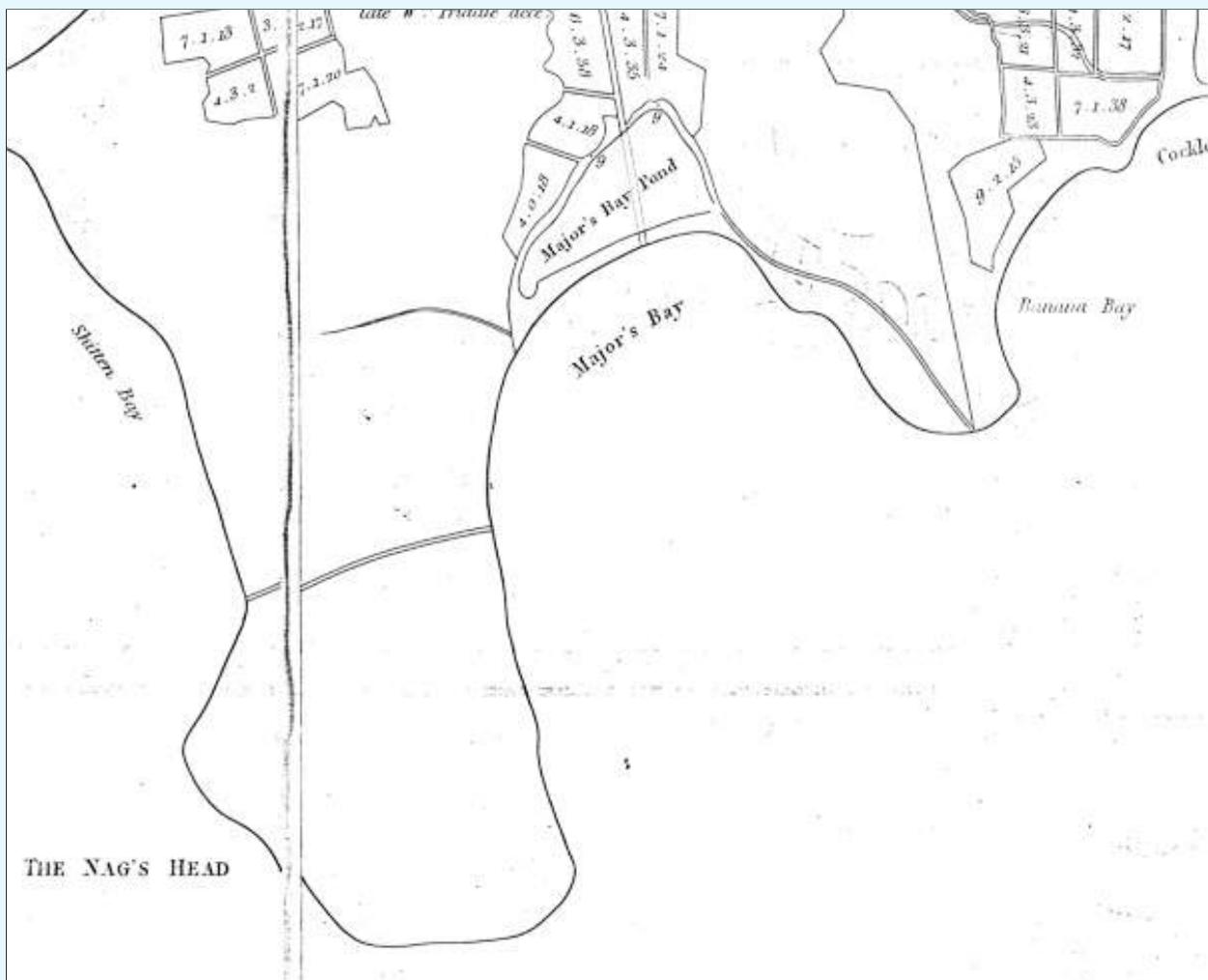


The Africans who were brought to St. Kitts and Nevis had to adapt to both the physical and human social environment in order to survive in this new world. They used the natural resources available on the two islands to feed themselves and to heal themselves. The Great Salt Pond would have been used to their advantage to procure salt to preserve their meats and add flavor to their meals. The marginalized lands, which were not considered by their white planter masters to be suitable for sugarcane cultivation, were skillfully and successfully cultivated by the enslaved Africans. These lands included the ghaut sides and mountainous extremes such as those cultivated by the enslaved Africans at Russell's Rest and other plantations. Even volcanic resources such as thermal springs and sulphur, were used by the enslaved Africans to improve their health. The Bath Spring and sulphur deposits at Brimstone Hill are excellent examples of such natural resources.

The Africans did a brilliant job of adapting to the way of life of their masters, learning their culture and technology and using same to their benefit. The battles fought by the enslaved Africans alongside their white masters at Brimstone Hill in St. Kitts and Maroon Hill in Nevis provide ample proof of how the enslaved Africans quickly learnt to use weapons that were technologically far more advanced than what they were accustomed to in Africa. The enslaved Africans fought with brilliance and with tenacity so as to ensure the survival of their family, and less importantly, their white master's colony. One of the greatest testimonies of the enslaved Africans' ability to survive is the fact that they actually landed alive at Shitten Bay after enduring the initial stages of slavery – from their capture, journey to the coast, and the middle passage.

Shitten Bay

Location: South East Peninsula, St. George



Map 1 showing the location of Shitten Bay on the South East Peninsula

Description: A small bay on the south-east coast of St. Kitts where slave ships docked prior to their entry into the capital harbor, Basseterre.

Significance: For the St. Kitts bound slaves, Shitten Bay was the end of the brutal journey from Africa to the West Indies notoriously referred to as the Middle Passage. That captive Africans were still alive upon inspection at Shitten Bay is a true example of the ability of this special race of people to survive difficult and even impossible circumstances.

Historical Background:

According to Mr. Greg Pereira (whose family has lived at the South East Peninsula for generations) Shitten Bay was a docking point for slavers. Slavers were slave vessels which sailed from the western coasts of Africa laden with Africans bound for a life of slavery in the West Indies. The fact that Africans were still alive on board the slave vessels when they landed at Shitten Bay is testimony to the ability of the Africans to survive.

The survival of the Africans would not be fully appreciated if one is not aware of the very horrible and traumatic circumstances that these Africans who landed, alive, at Shitten Bay endured. Before arriving at Shitten Bay the Africans would have survived four horrible episodes or stages of terror that proved mortal to thousands of their unfortunate family members and kinship. These brutal and cruel episodes were: their initial seizure or capture; their march or journey to the coast; their detention at the coast; and the journey from Africa to the New World aka the ‘Middle Passage’. Most of the information regarding what actually happened to the Africans during each of these stages was given by actual observers who witnessed these atrocities first hand. Some of these observers were slave dealers in their own right, including the famous John Newton, who wrote the song ‘Amazing Grace’. It is a point of interest to note that the said John Newton was once a resident of St. Kitts. The examples used here are summarized versions of the accounts given by some of these observers quoted by Thomas Fowell Buxton, in his book entitled ‘The Slave Trade’ (1835).

As previously mentioned, the first horror that the Africans who arrived at Shitten Bay had to survive was seizure or capture. The majority of the Africans who were seized and sold into slavery were victims of war and village raids. Most of the wars were driven by the sole purpose of obtaining captives to sell to the Europeans as slaves. According to Buxton (1835), the Rev. John Newton (rector of St. Mary’s Woolnooth, who at one period of his life was engaged in slave-traffic on the coast of Africa) strongly believed that the far greater part of the wars in Africa would have stopped if the Europeans had ceased to tempt the Africans by offering goods for slaves. All of these wars involved African tribes or kingdoms against other African tribes and kingdoms. Mr. Buxton (1835) tells us that most of the villagers who were seized were slaughtered. This initial episode of slavery was, by most accounts, the stage where most lives were lost. Most Africans who were captured were slain and the few who were spared were sold to the Europeans as slaves.

The following accounts are given by Buxton who quoted observations made by two different observers.

Bruce, who travelled in Abyssinia in 1770, in describing the slave-hunting expeditions there says: “The grown-up men are all killed, and are then mutilated, parts of their bodies being always carried away as trophies; several of the old mothers are also killed, while others, frantic with fear and despair, kill themselves. The boys and girls of a more tender age are then carried off in brutal triumph.”

Major Denham says: “On attacking a place, it is the custom of the country instantly to fire it; and, as they (the villages) are all composed of straw huts only, the whole is shortly devoured by the flames. The unfortunate inhabitants fly quickly from the devouring element, and fall immediately into the hands of their no less merciless enemies, who surround the place; the men are quickly massacred, and the women and children lashed together and made slaves.” Denham then tells us that the Begharmi nation had been discomfited by the Sheik of Bornou “in five different expeditions, when at least 20,000 poor creatures were slaughtered, and three-fourths that number, at least, driven into slavery.” And, in speaking of these wars, he uses this remarkable expression—“The season of the year had arrived (25th November) when the sovereigns of these countries go out to battle.”

One observer noted by Buxton (1835) explained that, “If the first assault is unsuccessful, the General adopts the inhuman expedient of reducing them by thirst; this is easily effected by encamping above the springs at the foot of the mountain, and thus cutting off their only supply of water. The miserable negroes often endure this siege for a week; and may be seen gnawing the bark of trees to extract a little moisture, till at length they are compelled to exchange their country, liberty, and families, for a drop of water. They every day approach nearer, and retreat on seeing the soldiers, until the temptation of the water shown them becomes too strong to be resisted. At length they submit to have the manacles fastened on their hands, and a heavy fork suspended to their necks, which they are obliged to lift at every step.”

These observations provide proof of the high level of mortality suffered at this initial stage of slavery, referred to as seizure.

Of those that survived seizure, the majority, again, died on the march or journey to the coast. The cruel nature of their confinement (in shackles and bound to each other) hastened the death of some of the Africans at this stage. Buxton (1835) provides us with a description of how the Africans are bound as they make the journey from their villages in the interior to the coast hundreds of miles away (in some cases).

“The slaves are commonly secured by putting the right leg of one and the left of another into the same pair of fetters. By supporting the fetters with a string, they can walk, though very slowly. Every four slaves are likewise fastened together by the neck, with a strong pair of twisted thongs; and in the night an additional pair of fetters is put on their hands, and sometimes a light iron chain passed around their necks.”

Apart from the mortality brought on by ill treatment and the horrid nature of their confinement, many Africans died of thirst and hunger on this journey to the coast. The following accounts quoted in Buxton’s (1835) work illustrates that in many instances, of the Africans who started the march to the coast, more died than survived.

“Riley informs us that Sidi Hamet, the Moor, narrated to him, as an instance of the sufferings consequent on the route by the Desert, that the caravan which he accompanied from Wednoon to Timbuctoo, in 1807, consisted on its setting out of 1 000 men and 4 000 camels; but only twelve

camels and twenty-one men escaped alive from the Desert.”

“In speaking of the route by the Desert, Lyon says: “*Children are thrown with the baggage on the camels, if unable to walk; but, if five or six years of age, the poor little creatures are obliged to trot on all day, even should no stop be made for fourteen or fifteen hours, as I have sometimes witnessed.*” “*The daily allowance of food is a quart of dates in the morning, and half a pint of flour, made into bazeen, at night. Some masters never allow their slaves to drink after a meal, except a watering- place.*” “*None of the owners ever moved without their whips, which were in constant use. Drinking too much water, bringing too little wood, or falling asleep before the cooking was finished, were considered nearly capital crimes; and it was in vain for these poor creatures to plead the excuse of being tired,— nothing could avert the application of the whip.*” “*No slave dares to be ill or unable to walk; but, when the poor sufferer dies, the master suspects there must have been something ‘wrong inside,’ and regrets not having liberally applied the usual remedy of burning the belly with a red-hot iron; thus reconciling themselves to their cruel treatment of these unfortunate wretches.*”

Jackson informs us that in 1805 “*a caravan from Timbuctoo to Tafiley was disappointed at not finding water at the usual watering-place, and entirely perished; 2 000 persons and 1 800 camels.*”

These accounts presented by Buxton (1835), underscores the colossal mortality the Africans suffered at the ‘march’ stage.

The ability of the Africans to survive is again tested at the stage of slavery known as the detention period. The Africans sold into slavery arrive at the coast, half dead and in an emaciated condition. Here, they await the arrival of the slave ship. Often, the slave ship is delayed for days and sometimes weeks. Such delays usually result in more death for the Africans as food and water run out. Buxton (1835), reporting on observations made by witnesses, illustrates the modus operandi or the normal procedure in dealing with overstocked detention cells at a particular slave mart in Badagry. He explains that in cases where there is an overstock or no buyers could be found for the Africans held as slaves, the Badagrain King is responsible for maintaining them. In such instances, Buxton explains that “*The King then causes an examination to be made, when the sickly, as well as the old and infirm, are carefully selected and chained by themselves in one the factories (five of which, containing upwards of one thousand slaves of both sexes, were at Badagry during my residence there); and the next day the majority of these poor wretches are pinioned and conveyed to the banks of the river, where having arrived, a weight of some sort is appended to their necks, and being rowed in canoes to the middle of the stream, they are flung into the water, and left to perish by the pitiless Badagrians. Slaves, who for other reasons are rejected by the merchants, undergo the same punishment, or are left to endure more lively torture at the sacrifices, by which means hundreds of human beings are annually destroyed.*”

After detention many Africans who survived the march to the coast were dead. The Africans who survived the detention stage are then loaded on to ships destined for the New World. This is the final stage of horror and mortality that the Africans have to survive before they reach to Shitten

Bay in St. Kitts. Many die at this stage because of poor, suffocating and inhumane conditions of confinement. Many also commit suicide. Insufficient food and water have caused an entire ‘cargo’ of Africans to perish. In many instances some Africans are drowned at sea for the simple reason that it may prove more profitable to the captain to drown the Africans and collect insurance rather than risk making a loss from the sale of sickly looking Africans as slaves.

Having survived seizure, the march, detention, and the ‘Middle Passage’, there is no question about the ability of the Africans to survive.

Here at Shitten Bay the enslaved Africans made their first contact with St. Kitts. It is also here that they were prepared for sale. This marks the beginning of their experience in St. Kitts and also an indication that their human rights were just as lost here as when they were first captured or seized. The emaciated and almost dead Africans were brought on deck to be resuscitated, cleaned, oiled and inspected for display and sale at Basseterre. This would ensure that the Africans fetch the best price at the slave market in Basseterre.



Authorities Consulted

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The Great Salt Pond

Location: South East Peninsula, St. George



The Great Salt Pond

Description: A denuded and extinct crater, it was the chief source of salt for both St. Kitts and Nevis. This particular salt pond was the main source of salt for the inhabitants of the island.

Significance:

The Great Salt Pond is a place of memory associated with adaptation and survival of the enslaved Africans. The salt from the salt ponds was essential for the preservation of food slaughtered or caught on the island, flavouring of food, and also used for medical purposes. The enslaved African's meager diet included meats preserved by salt.

Historical Background:

On 13th May, 1627, a ‘Treaty of Partition’ was established between the French (D’Esnambuc and Du Rossey) and the British (Sir Thomas Warner). The island of St. Kitts was divided into four quarters by this ‘Treaty of Partition’. The top quarter, called Capisterre, belonged to the French. The lower quarter, called Basseterre, also belonged to the French. The English owned the two middle quarters. The English Quarters were separated from each other by the central mountain range. The Great Salt Ponds were located in the French Quarter of Basseterre.

“And for Messrs. D’Enambuc and Du Rossey, their division shall be from the said river...to the salt ponds.” Southeby (1827).

The treaty also allowed the English access to the French Quarter to mine salt, underscoring the significance of the salt ponds. The said treaty also allowed the French access to the sulphur, limestone, andesite and silver mines in the English Quarter.

“Furthermore, whatever division may be made above, it is understood that hunting, fishing the salt ponds....the roads....the mines ... shall be common between the French and the English, for them to partake of in common.” Southeby (1827).

The salt ponds were necessary for the survival of the enslaved Africans as much of their diet included meats preserved by salt. Even though salted meats and fish were imported to feed the enslaved Africans, the portions were rather scant, and it would not be too difficult to imagine that enslaved Africans would have to supplement their rations with salted local fish and meat. The following report proves how the diet of the enslaved Africans on St. Kitts and Nevis was relatively, very restricted. They were overworked and underfed.

“...the allowance of food to working slaves in St. Christophers is not half of what is allowed to runaway slaves imprisoned in Jamaica; ...although the quantity of labour the master may exact by law extends to fifteen to sixteen hours a day, ...” The Anti-Slavery Reporter No. 73(1831)

Their scanty rations included foods that were preserved by salt. A close examination of the weekly allowance of food for the enslaved Africans reveals the significance of salt to their diet and their survival.

“Adult working male or female, to have of salt fish, herrings, shads, mackerel, and other salt provisions, 1½ lbs.: if fresh, double the quantity with half a pint of salt: one and a half bunch of plantains, weighing not less than 45 lbs., or of other farinaceous food; 9 pints corn or beans, 8 pints pease, or wheat or rye flour, or Indian cornmeal ...Invalids, and boys and girls from 10 to 15 years of age to have two-thirds, and boys and girls from 5 to 10 years of age, to have one-half of the above quantities of salt provisions, and of plantains, or other farinaceous food. Children from 1to 5 years of age, to have one-third of the above quantity of salt provisions, and one-third of the quantity of plantains, or other farinaceous food.” The Anti-Slavery Reporter No. 73(1831)

The value of the salt ponds at the South East Peninsula was underscored in the year 1639 when their salt supply ran low. The British and the French shed each other’s blood for this important resource.

“....certain difficulties arose with the English settlers which well-nigh led to armed conflict. The principal cause of this trouble was a shortage of salt from the ponds at the southern part of the island. These ponds were free to the inhabitants of both nations, according to the terms of the

original treaty of partition, and usually they yielded enough and to spare for everyone; but in the year 1639 they failed to produce a sufficient amount. The result was a scramble for the precious condiment which resulted in the death of a number of persons on both sides.” Crosse (1940)

Though most of the enslaved Africans were involved in sugar production, a few of them were involved in salt mining at the South East Peninsula.

“Few slaves in St. Kitts were employed in agriculture other than sugar, and only a small number were involved in salt raking...in the dry eastern peninsula where the salt ponds are located.” Higman (1995)

Even after emancipation Africans were employed in the harvesting of salt at the South East Peninsula. John Davy, who observed the mining of salt at the Great Salt Pond during a visit to St. Kitts, gave the following account: “*This lake at the time I saw it, on the 30th of March, was about two miles in circuit...The salt forms at the bottom. It is collected by labourers in punts about eight feet long, and four broad, and then conveyed to shore. Occasionally a crust forms like ice on the surface...The people employed have half of what they collect for their labour.*” Davy (1854)



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Anti-Slavery Reporter No. 73 (1831)

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Russell's Rest

Location: St. James Parish



Showing the windmill at Russell's Rest

Description: The estate was originally owned by the Russell family. However, through very strategic marriages, it became the uppermost section of the Stapleton Estate which lay between the villages of Butlers and Brick Kilm. It was for a time a very productive sugar estate. It is now the present site of the Nevis Prison Farm.

Significance:

Russell's Rest is a place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. Enslaved Africans were used to construct the sugar works as well as the living quarters of the Russells and Stapletons. The wealth generated from Russell's Rest Estate was a result of productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans.

Historical Background:

It was reported in 1660 that Russell's Rest was the largest estate in Nevis, at that time it was worked by 119 enslaved Africans. The estate got its name from Sir James Russell, who once owned the estate. By that time Sir James Russell was Governor of Nevis. He also became Governor of the Leeward Islands Colony in 1683 after the death of Governor Sir Williams Stapleton. It is believed that the Russell family was related to the Duke of Bedford in England. (Courtesy of the Nevis Archives)

Russell's Rest was typical of the mountain side plantations of the Leeward Islands. It would be fitting to include here a description of a typical village of the enslaved Africans on the sugar estates. Two different points of view or versions shall be given for comparison. The first is from the point of view of a pro-slavery advocate by the name of Alexander Barclay. The following was extracted from his book "A Practical View of the Present State of Slavery in the West Indies (1823)":

"The most common size of the negro houses is 28 feet long by 14 broad. Post of hard wood about 9 feet long, or 7 above ground, are placed at a distance of two feet from one another; and the space between is closely wattled up and plastered. The roof is covered with the long mountain-thatch, palmetto-thatch, or dried guinea-grass, either of which is more durable than the straw thatch used in this country. Cane tops are also used for the purpose, but are not so lasting. To throw off the rain the thatch is brought down a considerable distance over the walls, which in consequence look low, and the roof high. The house is divided into three, and sometime four apartments. The room in the middle, occupying the whole breadth of the house, has a door on each side, to admit a circulation of air. This is the sitting apartment, and here the poorer class make fire and cook their victuals; the more wealthy have a separate kitchen at a little distance. The smaller houses have the sitting room in one end, and two sleeping apartments in the other."

Behind the house is the garden, filled with plantains, ochras, and other vegetables, which are produced at all seasons. It abounds also with cocoa-nut and calabash trees. A good cocoa-nut will be a meal to a man, and boiled among the sugar (which the negroes frequently do), would be a feast to an epicure. It contains also about a pint of a delicious juice, called; cocoa-nut milk, the leaves, which are thick, and twelve or fifteen feet long, are shed occasionally all the year round; and not only make excellent fuel, but are sometimes used for thatch. The nut also yields oil for lamps, and cups to drink out of! No wonder it is so great a favourite that every negro village looks at a distance like a cocoa-nut grove. This singularly valuable and beautiful tree (the fibry part of which is in the East Indies manufactured into ropes and clothing), serves also purpose: from its great height, and perhaps in some degree from the pointed form of its leaves, it is very liable to be struck by lightning, and it affords near a house the same protection as a metallic conductor.

The calabash tree produced a large fruit, not eatable, but nevertheless valuable, as the skin of it is a hard and solid substance, like the shell of a nut, and when scooped out, answers the purpose of holding water, or cut across the middle, makes two cups or dishes. Every negro has his calabash, and many have them carved with figures like those which are tattooed on the skins of the Africans. They are used to carry out their breakfast to them when at work in the field; and from their lightness and strength, are preferable for this purpose to almost any kind of dish. Tin pans, however, are

sometimes used. In the garden too, and commonly under the shade of the low out branching calabash tree, are the graves of the family, covered with brick tombs.

They have also their hogsties: poultry houses are not wanted; the chickens are carefully gathered at night, and hung up in baskets to preserve them from the rats. The fowls lodge at all seasons in the trees about the houses. The premises belonging to each family are commonly surrounded with a fence; their provision grounds are generally at some distance.

The ordinary class of negroes have fixed beds, covered with deal boards and mats, on which they sleep under a single blanket or sheet, which is all that the climate requires. The rest of their furniture consists of a trunk or chest to hold their clothes, a small cupboard for their cups and dishes, iron pots and tin pans for cooking, a plain deal table, bench and a few chairs. The more wealthy, of which the number has increased much during the last ten years, sleep on beds filled with the dried leaves of the plantain tree, used also by the free people of colour: and the whole of their furniture, as I have before observed, is such as would astonish an English visitor, who, seeing it, would not easily believe himself in the house of a slave.” ‘A Practical View of the Present State of Slavery in the West Indies’ (pages 313-316).

It is obvious that Barclay, though his observations are very informative, is portraying the enslaved Africans as having a relatively comfortable existence. However, James Stephen in his book ‘The Slavery of the British West Indies Delineated: Volume 2’, gave a different description of the condition of the enslaved Africans, specifically in the Leeward Islands. Lawyer James Stephen was anti-slavery and he lobbied vigorously for its abolition. The following is extracted from his book ‘The Slavery of the British West Indies Delineated: Volume 2’.

‘...in the Leeward Islands, comprising Antigua, St. Christopher, Montserrat, Nevis and Tortola, the slaves are, generally speaking, and on many estates exclusively fed by provisions imported or bought by the master, and served out to them in weekly rations; the cultivatable lands there being so fully occupied in cane planting and so subject besides to long droughts, (which are destructive to native provisions, much more than to the hardy and succulent sugar cane) that there are either no sufficient allotments of land to spare for the slaves, or none that can be depended on for their support. The former, for brevity sake, I will call the home-fed and the latter the foreign-fed colonies.

It is further, however, necessary to premise, for the clearer apprehension of some of the evidence I have to adduce, that even in the foreign-fed colonies, we hear of the negroes’ provision grounds, often dignified by the name of gardens; because on many upland plantations, there are ridges of land between the cane pieces and the wooded mountain-tops, too sterile and steep for sugar culture, or for any other purpose than allotments to the slaves for what are called mountain provision-grounds; and which, from their great altitude and the adjacency of the woods, are less subject to drought than the lands below. On the lowland estates also, there are commonly “gut sides”, i.e. the steep borders of wash courses, and other broken bits of land unfit for cane-planting, which the slaves of course are allowed to make such use of as few of them are able to do. There are also commonly a few square yards of vacant ground dividing the negro huts, which the occupiers may plant if they please; but which generally serve only for yards and passages between the huts. A

calabash tree, from which the culinary and other vessels of the slaves are supplied, or some other tree, is sometimes seen there, and sometimes a few wild plantains or bananas, which, when intermixed with the huts, give the group a pretty appearance at a distance; but those arid little spots furnish in no degree, or a most minute one at best; any articles of food.

All these petty portions of soil collectively, where there are no mountain provision-grounds, are capable of contributing in so very trivial a degree to the support of the gang at large, and the attempts of the few individuals who endeavour to raise articles of food from them, are so often wholly frustrated by droughts, that in an estimate of the general means of subsistence they may fairly be thrown out of the account. They have been so indeed by such laws of the Leeward Islands, as regulate the allowances of food by the masters; and even by the more candid of the colonial witnesses and writers. Nor are the mountain provision-grounds in those colonies a resource of much importance; except on a very few estates, where from local circumstances they are more accessible, and more productive than common. In general, they make such small returns of the inferior articles of food they yield, and cost such of the slaves as are able to cultivate them so much fatigue and detriment to their health, from exposure to the chill air and drizzling rains of the mountains, and from the temptation to eat their produce before it is ripe, that I have heard it disputed as a doubtful question between experienced planters in St. Christopher, whether the possession of them is, on the whole, any advantage whatever to an estate.' James Stephen's 'The Slavery of the British West Indies Delineated: Volume 2'. Pages 261-263

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The Nevis Archives

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Bath Hotel and Thermal Springs

Location: Bath Village, St. John



The magnificent and resplendent Bath Hotel

Description: The Bath Hotel was the property of one of Nevis' wealthiest planters, Mr. John Huggins. It was built in 1778 at very huge cost. It was the playground of the rich and the royal. It was the first spa in that part of the world. It incorporated the thermal mineral springs that flow in situ. These springs were reputed to have healing and therapeutic properties.

Significance:

- Bath Village is place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans, who were used to construct the hotel. The Bath Hotel was grand in both scale and luxury. It was the first of its kind in the Caribbean. Enslaved Africans also provided service to the

guests. It must be noted that the guests were not ordinary folks. The guest list included royalty and the richest aristocrats of the Caribbean, America, and Europe. The enslaved Africans contributed to the construction and operation of the hotel that brought worldwide fame to the island of Nevis.

- The thermal springs of the Bath Hotel is a place of memory associated with the adaption and survival of the enslaved Africans. Many enslaved Africans used the healing and therapeutic properties of the thermal springs to successfully treat their ailments. This undoubtedly prolonged their lives and thereby contributed to their survival.

Historical Background:



The old bath house above the thermal stream proudly displays original stone work. It houses several compartments with thermal baths at varying degrees of hotness.

The following excerpts give testimony to the healing properties of the Bath Thermal Springs. They also reveal how the enslaved Africans used the natural resources present on the islands to enhance their survival.

"I knew a negro boy who was sent down "from Barbados to Nevis for that purpose, (after being salivated twice in vain) cured of a very bad leprosy by using it; and indeed all distempered people both whites and blacks find great benefit by it. The salivations had caused the boy to break out in running sores or ulcers all over from head to foot, and they being added to the leprosy made him a sad (rueful) spectacle; however, by drinking, and washing three or four times a day for an hour at least each time, in the water of this river, he went back to his Master sound and clean at two months end.

The second "tells us that it cured men in two or three days who were tormented with a burning swelling,



The thermal spring below the bath Hotel



as scalding from Dew of Trees, (Smith's Obs. page 57). I guess that Smith means here Manchineal Trees, under whose shade some of his men had inconsiderately lain down for repose or stood to escape a shower of rain, or perhaps cut down wood for firing." (The West Indian Quarterly, Vol. 3, July, 1887. Pp. 158)

It is not difficult to deduce that, if enslaved Africans as far away as Barbados were brought to Nevis to benefit from the healing properties of the Bath thermal spring, then, the enslaved Africans living on Nevis and in St. Kitts must have used the said springs to their health's benefit.





The following excerpt provides evidence that the enslaved Africans contributed significantly to the construction and the grandeur of the Bath Hotel.

This lodging-house is a large massive stone building, calculated and fitted to accommodate about fifty boarders. It was built when slavery was in existence; and although the fact of slaves being employed in its erection renders it somewhat difficult to ascertain the real amount expended in its construction, it is said that at least £30,000 was so spent; and the statement will not appear at all incredible to anyone who has visited it and noted its extent. The building has, however, obviously been erected on a scale much too ambitious. It was built, in its present gigantic proportions, by its first proprietor- a Mr. Huggins. (Baird, 1850)

The following account of Sir Frederick Treves Bart gives a hint of the spendour of the Bath Hotel.

"On Nevis certain hot springs were discovered, close to Charles Town. Now a hot spring was the one thing needed to make the islands a fitting resort for people of quality, for at the commencement of the eighteenth century the life of a man of taste and breeding could not be supported without a spa.

At Nevis, therefore, a spa was established; and here, to this Tunbridge Wells of the Caribbees, came all the fashionable of the West Indies – the rich merchants with their wives and daughters, the planters, the majors and captains who were invalided or on leave, and officers of any ship of war that could make an excuse to anchor within sight of Booby Island.

The great people arrived in schooners, with heaps of luggage and a tribe of black servants. From early to late they whirled round in one unending circle of gaiety. There were morning rides to the hills, picnic parties on Mount Pleasant, fishing expeditions to Newcastle Bay, dinners where heated men with loosened cravats proposed the toast of succeeding beauties, and dances which were kept up until sunrise, and indeed until the ponies were brought round to the door again.



This led to many things- to strolls along the sands by moonlight, to many a saunter to the woods to look for fireflies that were never found, to many a whispered invitation to come out on the hill to see the Southern Cross that was forgotten before the hill was reached. Most memorable of all was the full-dress parade after the church service on Sunday; for then “the Clarindas, Belindas, and Elviras of the period swept along, patched and painted, hooped and farthingaled à outrance with fly caps, top knots and commodes, tight-laced bodices, laced aprons, and flounced petticoats, accompanied or followed by the ‘pretty fellows,’ who wore square-tailed silk and velvet coats of all colours, periwigged and top-hatted, silk-stockinged, and shoed with red-heeled shoes, their sword-knots trailing almost on the ground, and their canes dangling from the fifth button.” (Bart, 1908)

Authorities Consulted

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The West Indian Quarterly, Vol. 3, July, 1887.



Maroon Hill

Location: Zetlands, St. George



Maroon Hill with Nevis Peak towering above it

Description: This is the site where a brave and resilient group of enslaved Africans stood their ground and defended the island against the attacking French troops. What made this even more remarkable is that the white militia had already floundered. Maroon Hill is the site where runaway enslaved Africans hid themselves from the planters and militia in their attempt to escape slave conditions.

Significance:

Maroon Hill is a place of memory associated with the adaptation and survival of the enslaved Africans.

Historical Background:



The enslaved Africans knew too well that their survival was enhanced if they remained as a family unit. If an event occurred that led to the separation of the family, especially the removal of the male father figure, the chances of survival for the affected enslaved Africans was greatly diminished. One such event that usually ended in the separation or dispersal of the family was when invading forces attacked the island and eventually loaded their ships with several enslaved Africans as the spoils of war. For this reason the enslaved Africans on Nevis often joined the British masters in the defence of the island against the French especially. One such event occurred in the area around Zetlands known as Maroon Hill. The following excerpt from a publication from the Nevis Archives provides some details of this event where the enslaved Africans fought for their survival.

"In 1705, an event occurred in Nevis which is now forgotten but very important to local and Caribbean history. That year, the French under Pierre Le Moyne D'Iberville, the military commander of the colony of Louisiana in North America, invaded the island on Good Friday and forced the Nevis militia to surrender on Easter Sunday after three days of fighting. The militia, only 430 strong, consisted of every white man between 14 and 60 years of age. They fought back as best they could against 2, 100 French troops supported by 36 warships. Many soldiers were bloodthirsty pirates recruited by the French. They showed no mercy to Nevis and immediately began to loot and plunder the island, and the French officers in charge were unable to control them.

They captured 3, 200 slaves, placed them on ships, and carried them off to Martinique. A number of slaves managed to escape the French, and withdrew to Maroon Hill above Zetland



Estate. There they established a defensive position. The French expected to capture 1,200 more slaves and they marched up mountain to take them. The slaves refused to surrender.

French records declare that their forces were “driven back time and again by their murderous fire”. Outraged by the unexpected resistance of the slaves, the French placed the leading planters of Nevis in confinement in St. Paul’s Church in Charlestown, demanding another 1, 200 slaves or a tribute of 30 English pounds per slave. To secure payment, they took four planters as hostages and locked them in prison in Martinique for nine years until the money was paid.

An unidentified English militia officer wrote of the slaves’ valiant action, “... their brave behaviour and defence there shamed what some of their masters did, and they do not shrink to tell us so”. Of the slaves taken from Nevis, at least six, probably more, ended their journey in New Orleans. Governor Bienville of Louisiana took three into his own household as personal servants.”

Authorities Consulted

Hubbard, Vincent. ‘Swords, Ships and Sugar: A History of Nevis to 1900’. (1993)
Nevis archives



Brimstone Hill Fortress

Location: St. Thomas



The Arcade of the Regimental Officers Quarters and Fort George at Brimstone Hill

Description: One the most expansive and well preserved British polygonal styled fortification in the Western Hemisphere, Brimstone Hill Fortress was listed as a U.N.E.S.C.O. World Heritage Site in 1999.

Significance:

Brimstone Hill Fortress is place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. The labour, both skilled and unskilled, of the enslaved Africans contributed to construction of the Brimstone Hill Fortress. Brimstone Hill was used by both the French and the British as source for volcanic rocks for construction; limestone for mortar, fertilizer and clarifying sugar; and also a source of sulphur. The enslaved Africans were the ones who mined and eventually processed these raw materials. The magnificent fortress that they built on Brimstone Hill still stands today, a beacon highlighting the productivity and skill of the enslaved Africans.

Historical Background:



In 1627 the French and the English established a Treaty of Partition to divide St. Kitts between their two nations. Brimstone Hill, located in the English Quarter, was deemed to be neutral and accessible to both French and English (Southey). The hill was mined for three important resources – limestone to be burnt and crushed into cement for construction mortar; volcanic rocks to be cut and shaped into construction stone blocks; and sulphur deposits for medicinal purposes. The enslaved Africans provided the labour to extract these critical resources from Brimstone Hill. In doing so, they contributed significantly to the physical development of the island, as the materials they mined were used by both the French and the English to construct all of their dwelling houses and sugar and indigo works. Between the years 1627 and 1689, the hill was used by both nations on St. Kitts jointly for mining purposes only. However, an event occurred in 1689 that changed this arrangement forever.

In July 1689 the French mounted guns on Brimstone Hill and fired upon the English in Fort Charles at Cleverly Hill below (Hubbard, 2002). The French were successful in capturing not just the Fort, but the entire island was under siege. The English sent for help which eventually arrived on Thursday 19th June, 1690 when Major-General Timothy Thornhill, landed his fleet and troops at Frigate Bay (Southey, 1827). Enslaved Africans were used by the English to mount four canons up Brimstone Hill. This enabled the English to do to the French (occupying Cleverly Hill Fort) what the French had done to them a year earlier. The efforts of the enslaved Africans not only

This section of Brimstone Hill shows limestone which was once mined by the enslaved Africans.

enabled the English to recapture the island, but also contributed to the establishment of the first fortification on Brimstone Hill.

Over the one hundred years spanning 1690 and 1790, enslaved Africans were used to construct on Brimstone Hill, a fortress that would eventually be known as ‘The Gibraltar of the West Indies’ (Smith, 1996). They mined the limestone and volcanic andesite rocks in situ. They converted the limestone into mortar and carved the volcanic rocks into building blocks. Finally, under the guidance of the Royal Engineers, the enslaved Africans constructed the most formidable fortress in the British West Indies. The enslaved Africans used the Brimstone Hill Fortress as a means of cultural adaptation, as they worked alongside the whites.



This huge and magnificent lime kiln at Brimstone Hill was used by the enslaved Africans to heat the limestone for conversion into cement.



The Brimstone Hill Fortress was valiantly defended by enslaved Africans who were enlisted in the Militia. The frailness of the British soldiers in the wake of tropical diseases was evident in their high mortality rate. According to Chartrand and Chappell (1996), the death toll in the West Indies due to tropical diseases between 1793 and 1802 was 45,000 soldiers, including nearly 1500 officers. In 1796 alone 41 percent of the white soldiers died (Chartrand and Chappell, 1996). It was well known that the enslaved Africans were physically stronger in terms of their resistance to the tropical diseases that were killing off the white soldiers. For this reason the British in St. Kitts enlisted hundreds of enslaved Africans to serve as Black Soldiers in a special West India Regiment known as the St. Kitts Corps of Embodied Slaves, 40 of whom served as regulars at Brimstone Hill (Chartrand and Chappell, 1996). An Act passed in St. Kitts in 1795 facilitated the enlistment of enslaved Africans in return for their freedom after their years of service.

The enslaved Africans used their contribution to the defense of the Brimstone Hill Fortress and their service in the St. Kitts Corps of Embodied Slaves as means of survival. Many enslaved Africans enlisted in the local Militia because of the promise of freedom at the end of their service. According to Chartland and Chappell (1996)

“At St. Kitts, by an act of 1795, some 500 slaves were selected to assist in the defence of the island, a number doubled over the next two years” (pg. 17)

“By 1803, the proportion of black soldiers was about one to every two white soldiers in garrison” (pg. 4)



One of the greatest fears of the enslaved Africans was separation from their family, especially if they were sent to another island. The enslaved Africans were fully aware that invading forces often carried off enslaved Africans as part of the bounty of war. This was one factor which accounted for the bravery in battle of the enslaved

Africans, one that surpassed that of the British soldiers at Brimstone Hill. Evidence of the bravery and effectiveness of the enslaved Africans in their defense of the fortress during the siege of 1782 is well documented.

“An important point to note during the battle for Brimstone Hill was the bravery and tenacity of the Africans. The defenders of Brimstone Hill included parts of the 1st or Royal Scots and 15th Yorkshire Regiments, island militia, detachments of the Royal Artillery and Engineers, together with a party from the Royal Navy Sailors (Smith, 1992). However, the heroic actions of the slaves were most noticeable. On Saturday 12th, the English, from their vantage point on Brimstone Hill witnessed the Africans engaged in guerilla tactics. That day they brought several French prisoners into the Garrison. The prisoners included the Adjutant of the Viennois Regiment. The Marquis de Bouillé himself barely escaped capture. His servant, however, was not that lucky. On Sunday the 13th January the enslaved Africans killed a French officer and brought another belonging to an artillery regiment as a prisoner. So formidable were the African defenders that the Marquis de Bouillé had to threaten the English with destroying their property in order to call off the Slaves” (Manchester, 1971).

Brimstone Hill is, for a variety of reasons as outlined above, a place of memory associated with “the enslavement of Africans” on St. Kitts.



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Chartland and Chappell. ‘British Forces in the West Indies 1793 – 1815. (1996)
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RESISTANCE AND REVOLT





All humans who are forced to live under the conditions of slavery will ultimately resist such conditions, whether overtly or covertly - actively or passively striving for their freedom. If their milder efforts at resisting fail, then the enslaved will ultimately revolt violently until their oppressors are annihilated, or until they that are revolting are themselves annihilated. Such was the case of the enslaved Africans in the New World.

Even though the historical records are sketchy in terms of highlighting any major slave revolt or uprising on any plantation on St. Kitts and Nevis, there were many cases of subtle forms of resistance and also open and candid displays of intolerance of slavery by the enslaved Africans on the two islands.

The case of Betto Douglas is an excellent example of how a single female parent, existing under conditions of slavery, was able to resist such horrible conditions in a most subtle and extraordinary way: She saved enough money to purchase the freedom of her offsprings (a Herculean feat considering she was an enslaved African). Her pursuit for her own freedom attracted the attention of the abolitionist movement in England.

The Vambelle's Estate of Nathaniel Wells also reminds us of another covert form of resistance, whereby enslaved females sought to ensure that their children escaped slavery. Juggy and a few other enslaved females had their offsprings fathered by their white master. Juggy's son Nathaniel not only became a free man, but he inherited the majority of his father's wealth, and became one of the wealthiest persons on both sides of the Atlantic.

Places such as Maroon Hill and Mount Misery bring forth memories of more overt active forms of resistance – escape or maroonage. Marcus of the Woods is perhaps the most notable maroon; he managed to escape, and remained free right up until emancipation. The Stapleton Estate provides excellent examples of resistance by escaping. Such escapes were largely for brief periods only; this type of resistance was referred to as petit maroonage.



Romney Manor

Location: Old Road, St. Thomas



Ruins of a Boiler Room and other sugar works at Wingfield Estate which is adjacent to Romney Manor

Description: An old sugar estate that was originally the site of the dwelling place of the Kalinago Ubutu Tegraman. The property eventually fell into the possession of Sam Jefferson, and later the Earl of Romney. There are ruins and artifacts on the estate that testify to the grandeur and prosperity of the estate in the sugar era. There exist remains of an aqueduct, steam mill and chimney, distillery, and dwelling house.

Significance:

Romney Manor is a place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. Enslaved Africans were used to construct the sugar works, dams and aqueduct, as well as the living quarters. The wealth generated from Romney Estate was a result of the labour of the enslaved Africans.

Romney Manor is a place of memory associated with the adaptation and survival of the enslaved Africans. The case



of Betto Douglas, an enslaved woman on the estate of the Earl of Romney, gives evidence of this. Betto Douglas purchased the freedom of her two sons to ensure their survival. She forfeited her own freedom when she secured her sons' freedom with all the money she owned. She was therefore compelled to undergo hardship to ensure her own survival.

Romney Manor is a place of memory associated with resistance and revolt of enslaved Africans against their condition of slavery. The act by Betto Douglas to purchase the freedom of her two sons was an act of resistance against the condition of slavery. Furthermore, her efforts to secure her own freedom through the good graces of the Earl of Romney, is another way in which Betto Douglas sought to resist the condition of slavery.

Romney Manor is a place of memory associated with the human rights of the enslaved Africans. The treatment administered to Betto Douglas by Mr. Cardin is an example of how the enslaved Africans were deprived of their human rights. The manner in which the local courts handled the Betto Douglas case and subsequently ruled on the matter is an example of how little the local courts cared to defend and uphold the human rights of the enslaved Africans. Finally, the arguments in the House of Lords against the handling of the Betto Douglas' matter contributed to the fight to uphold and protect the human rights of the enslaved Africans.



Historical Background:

The site of Romney Manor was originally the dwelling place of the Kalinago Chief Tegraman, who sheltered and fed Thomas Warner and his men when they arrived on St. Christopher in 1623 (Southey, 1827). After the French and English combined forces and murdered Chief Tegraman and his warriors, the property was occupied by Mr. Sam Jefferson. It was later leased to the Earl of Romney. The estate was a very rich one. It produced chiefly tobacco, indigo and later sugar and sugar byproducts, most notably, rum. The estate was one of only two estates on St. Kitts that used river water power to turn the rollers in its sugar mills. The estate also had steam-powered sugar mills. A recent archaeological survey of the site has revealed a rum distillery. The many relics on the site provide a virtual time capsule that illustrates the productivity of the enslaved Africans who built these structures, and is testimony to their contribution to the wealth of the estate owners. The 'Anti-slavery Reporter Vol. 2, June 1827 concluded:

“Let us mark too in this transaction the real source of those revenues, which enable the owners of West Indian estates to vie with the proudest nobles of the land in every luxurious enjoyment; which enable them even to purchase those seats in parliament that give security to their uncontrolled power of exaction; and thus enable them also to maintain a system which violates with impunity every obligation of justice and humanity, every maxim of constitutional law, and every precept of the gospel. The real source of those revenues is to be found in the compelling power of the whip and the stocks and the dungeon; which may, at will, be put in operation to secure to the absent owner an income of nine pounds per year from the toil of a wretched female, who has already worn out her strength, not only by the labors of nearly half a century for her master’s benefit, but by effecting besides the redemption of her two sons from stocks and the cart whip; and the very dregs of whose age and feebleness are to be drained in contributing to his multiplied enjoyments, by toiling under a vertical sun, and under the whip of the driver, for his sole advantage.”

Lord Bathurst was moved to comment on a case involving the cruel treatment of an enslaved female on Romney Estate. This enslaved woman was Betto Douglas. Both the cruel treatment she received and the injustice meted out to her at the courts in Basseterre were so profound that it created quite a stir among the Lords of the House of Commons in England. Her tale illustrates resistance, survival and struggle for human rights by the enslaved Africans in St. Kitts. The following is her story as it was presented to Governor Maxwell and Earl Bathurst of the House of Commons.

Betto Douglas is a Mulatto slave, about fifty-two years of age, belonging to the Earl of Romney. Some years previous to present transactions she had requested Mr. Goldfrap, one of Lord Romney’s attorneys on his estates in St. Christopher, to solicit for her the proprietor’s permission to be allowed



Figure 1 This beautiful building rests on stonework laid by enslaved Africans at Romney Manor

to purchase freedom of her two sons. The request was complied with; and this poor slave had the delight of thus securing the freedom of her offspring, probably under an impression that she might not live long enough to effect her own liberation as well as theirs. Mr. Goldfrap, in a letter to Governor Maxwell states, that he had on that occasion strongly recommended Betto Douglas to Lord Romney's favourable consideration, which recommendation his lordship seemed to construe as a wish that she should be manumitted; and, as Mr. Goldfrap, who at that time ceased to be his agent, understood, had issued orders to his new attorney to that effect.

Several years however elapsed, and no steps for her enfranchisement were taken. She had been allowed to reside in a house, apart from the estate, but was obliged, by the new agent, to pay a certain sum (three dollars and a half) per month to Lord Romney. The following is her own account when interrogated before the magistrates: - "Mr. Cardin told me I must go and work out for three and a half dollars a month. I told him I was not able to give that price: and he would insist, and I went. And after I found it was hard, I went to him again, and told him the times were hard- I was not able to give that price- that I sold all I had to pay the money: and he would insist. I then said I had nothing to give him, unless I went upon the highways, and committed something bad. He would insist upon money. I then went to Master Richard; I tell him to speak to his father, and tell him how hard the times were- and he promised to do so. I told him his father had told me that he had directions to manumit me, and I'd thank him to speak to him. The month following that, I strove and made up three dollars and a quarter, and carried it to him: and he told me if I did not give him the other quarter he would stop my allowance."

"When owing two months' hire, I went to Mr. Cardin with four dollars, saying, I could pay no more. He refused to receive the four dollars, but confined me two weeks in a room; and my children went and borrowed three dollars, and made up the seven dollars for the two months' hire. I paid for the time I was in confinement, and received no allowance of any kind."



For about three years matters went on in this way. The monthly pittance of three dollars and a half was wrung from the toil, or the prostitution of this poor creature, or supplied by the affection of her children and relatives. But in February, 1825, these resources failed; and being hard pressed for arrears by Mr. Cardin, and having the assurance of his predecessor Mr. Goldfrap, that he believed her to have had from Lord Romney a promise of manumission, Betto Douglas, by the advice of that gentleman, presented a petition to the Governor, praying for his interposition, in order to procure for her relief and justice.*

**The declaration that she could not make up the sum “unless she went upon the highways,” &c. appears to indicate some such wretched resource as is here stated.*



Authorities Consulted

Anti-Slavery Reporter: No. 25. June, 1827.



Vambelle's Estate

Location: St. Anne



Ruin of a Chimney at Vambelles Estate

Description: William Wells sired five children by an enslaved African on his plantation. One of the children, Nathaniel Wells, went on to become the owner of his father's estates, received superior education, and was a wealthy and prominent citizen in England.

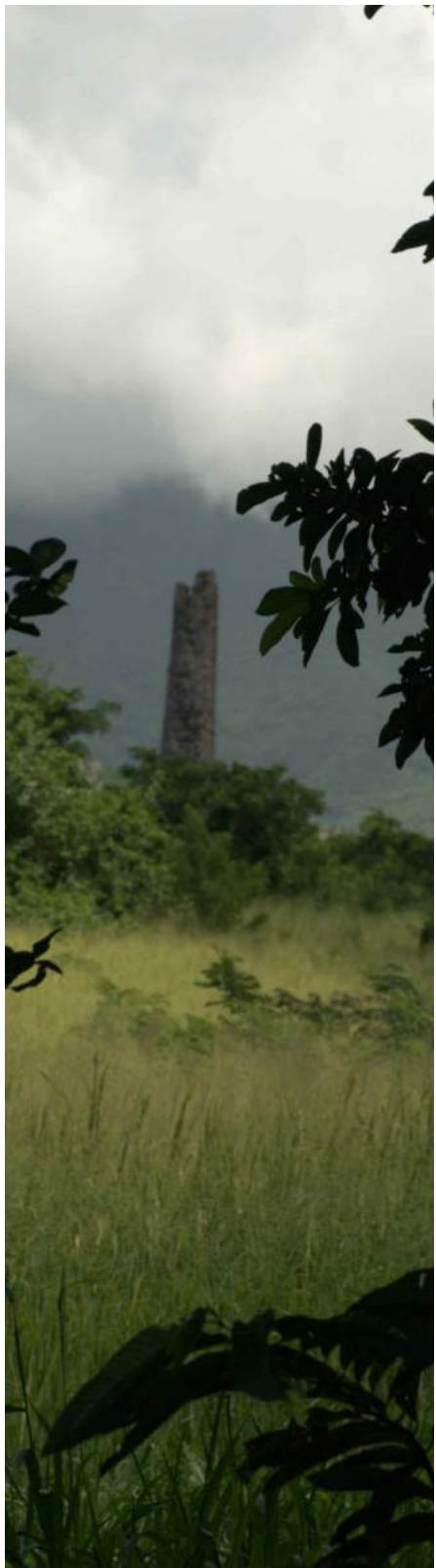
Significance:

Vambelle's Estate is place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. Enslaved Africans were used to construct the sugar works, dams and aqueduct, as well as the living quarters. The wealth generated from Vambelle's Estate was derived from the labour of the enslaved Africans. However, this was one of the rare cases where the son of an enslaved African became the owner of this and other plantations.

Vambelle's Estate is a place of memory associated with the adaptation and survival of the enslaved Africans. The children of the enslaved Africans who were fathered by Mr. Wells had their freedom secured. The enslaved females who bore the children of Mr. Wells ensured the survival of her offspring and also herself.

Vambelle's Estate is a place of memory associated with the human rights of the enslaved Africans. Mr. Wells, by securing the freedom of his children from the enslaved African woman, allowed said children to enjoy the basic human right of freedom from bondage. By willing his estate to the children he had with enslaved women, he empowered them so they could exercise their human right to own property.

Historical Background:



The last will and testimony of Nathaniel Wells' father, William Wells, provides some clues to the amount of wealth he amassed from the labour of the Africans he enslaved.

What is most significant is the fact that during that dark and oppressing period of slavery, the off-spring of an enslaved African was able to receive the highest level of education from one of the finest schools in England. Nathaniel Wells was able to multiply his inheritance to such an extent that, in spite of his colour and race, he elevated himself and became an economic, social, and political giant at a time when the tides were turned against the black man, and in a place where the black race was the poor, the servant class, and the minority.

Also contained in the last will and testimony of Wells is evidence of a very covert and subtle way that the enslaved African female ensured the survival of her off-springs. She willingly bore the child of the white master. In most cases these African women were raped by the white men and were thus impregnated. None the less, the African women had knowledge of which bush/herbs to use to either prevent or abort pregnancy. With this sort of control, one may be left to wonder whether it was that William Wells was using Juggy and the other black females to ensure continuation of his line, or whether it was that the enslaved females were infact ensuring the survival of their off-spring and race.

I William Wells of the said island of St. Christophers Planter do make this my last Will and Testament in the following manner viz. I do hereby give Freedom unto my house Negro women Hannah, Juggy, Gotto and Kate and I do hereby release them from Slavery and I do hereby give unto my said Hannah and Juggy the annual sum of sixty pound Sterling to each of them during their natural lives to be paid unto each of them half yearly I also give to my said Hannah her Negro woman present and all her Children I give to my said Gotto and Kate above mentioned the annual Sum of twenty pounds



Sterling to each of them during their natural lives to be paid unto each of them half yearly. I do hereby give Freedom to my Mullato woman Sue Wells and I give her also twenty pounds Sterling to be paid her annually during her natural life half yearly.

The remainder of my Estate both real and personal whatsoever and wheresoever I give unto my Natural and Dear Son Nathaniel Wells whose mother is my woman Juggy and who is now in England for his Education and at a School at Newington near London.

I recommend my Dear Son Nathaniel Wells abovementioned to the particular Care and Attention of my Executors hereafter named and that they will be pleased to pay particular Attention to his Education and that when he is fit and qualified they will send him him[sic] to the university of Oxford and According to my Calculation the remainder of my Estate (after the above Legacies are Satisfied and complied with consisting of my three plantations and Money due and at Interest in this Island and also the money I have in 4 per Cent Stake that my Dear Son Nathaniel Wells will inherit and enjoy by virtue of this my last Will and Testament at Least one hundred and twenty thousand pounds Sterling.

Nathaniel Wells, son of an enslaved African, became owner of Vambelle's estate.

Authorities Consulted

Last will and Testimony of William Well



Maroon Quarter

Location: South East Peninsula, St. George



Showing Maron Quarter

Description: A hill on the south-east coast of St. Kitts where enslaved Africans who ran away took refuge

Significance:

Maroon Quarter is a place of memory of resistance and revolt by enslaved Africans. Running away was a common way the enslaved Africans displayed resistance against their condition of slavery. The term maroon is used to refer to runaway enslaved Africans. This particular section of the South East Peninsula was called Maroon Quarter because it was a hide out for enslaved Africans who acted on their decision to run away from the terrible condition of slavery.

Enslaved Africans managed to stay alive for weeks and months in the remote and arid environs of Maroon Quarter. This is testament to the ability of the African race to adapt and survive.

Authorities Consulted

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Mount Misery

Location: St. Paul



Road just above the St. Pauls' Primary School leading to Mount Misery

Description: Mount Misery is the highest peak in the central mountain range of St. Kitts. It stands at a height of 3792ft. This mountain was a place of refuge for enslaved Africans who ran away to escape the conditions of slavery.

Significance:

Mount Misery is a place of memory associated with the adaptation and survival of the enslaved Africans. The terrain of the mountain is very steep and treacherous. That the runaway enslaved Africans were able to survive in these environs for weeks and months is testament to their ability to adapt to and survive difficult circumstances.

Mount Misery is a place of memory associated with resistance and revolt of enslaved Africans against their condition of slavery. Running away and escaping was one of the most overt means by which the enslaved Africans resisted and revolted against the conditions of slavery on St. Kitts. Many of the enslaved Africans who ran away from the plantations found refuge in the elevated and forested environs of Mount Misery.

Mount Misery is a place of memory associated with the deprivation of the human rights of the enslaved Africans. The enslaved Africans who resisted slave conditions by running away and hiding out at Mount Misery were subsequently hunted down using dogs and even the military. When captured they were severely punished or put to death. This proves that the enslaved Africans were deprived of the human right to move about freely and also deprived of their right to life.

Historical Background:

The highest mountain on the island of St. Kitts stands at 3792 feet above sea level. It is referred to by two names; Mount Liamigua, in reference to the Kalinago name for the island and Mount Misery by the British. Mount Misery was often used as a place of refuge by enslaved Africans who resisted their conditions of slavery by running away. They would hide out in the vegetative cover of Mount Misery for days, in cases of petit maronage, or for several weeks and months for more permanent maroonage. What was incredible about this was the ability of the enslaved Africans to adapt to and survive in this rugged, and for the most part, treacherous terrain. Evidence of this is contained in the following observation that was made by William Smith on an excursion to the summit of this mountain in 1745.

“Somewhat higher up we discovered at a distance a Hut that undoubtedly belonged to some run-away Negroes; there was a small Gut or Gully between it and us, but to speak truth, we were too weary to go out of our way to visit it. We could plainly discern a few Foot-steps of some cloven-hoofed Beasts, and guessed them to be young Heifers that had been stolen, and drove thither by the run-away Negroes; though by the way let me tell you, I can by no means conceive how heifers could possibly clamber up a Precipice, where we ourselves were very hard put to it to ascend for steepness, even by helping up each other... ” Smith (pg. 14)

Mount Misery was the preferred site of the enslaved Africans who chose to resist slavery by running away. Two notable cases of this sort of resistance, one occurring on the French Quarter, the other on the English Quarter, have been so well documented that the runaway enslaved Africans involved have become legends. The case in the French Quarter predates that of the English Quarter which





occurred in 1639, ten months after De Poincy arrived on the island. The terrible punishment that was meted out to the captured enslaved Africans who resisted slavery by running away to the forests of Mount Misery is testimony to the blantant disregard the planters had for the lives and human rights of the enslaved Africans.

"In the month of November, more than sixty Negroes from Capesterre, in St. Christopher's, left their masters, and fled to the mountains, with their women and children. De Poincy sent 500 men to destroy them. The fugitives had built a sort of fort upon the highest part of the mountain: upon one side it was defended by the precipice, and upon the other there was only one narrow pass by which it could be approached; it was stormed, and some of these unfortunate wretches burnt alive, others quartered, and their limbs exposed upon stakes. Their most determined leader escaped, and was afterwards pursued by six men, who, not being able to secure his person, tried to shoot him: he soon observed that none of their muskets would go off, and in his turn attacked them sword in hand, put them to flight, and gained a musket and hat by his victory. The next day, other soldiers were sent after him, by whom he was shot: his body was quartered, and the limbs hung up in the most frequented places." Southey, (1827)

The most famous maroon in the history of St. Kitts could quite possibly be Marcus 'King of the Woods'. According to Dyde (2005), in 1831 Marcus, a male slave ran away from the Cunningham Estate near Cayon. Marcus took to the mountains and gained the title 'Marcus King of the Woods. Marcus is said to have organized other runaways, who came and went into raiding parties which harassed the estates on the Leeward side of the island for food and supplies (Dyde, 2005). Further information on Marcus comes from Richardson (1983) who wrote that "...about thirty maroons led by 'Marcus King of the Woods' roamed the forested highlands above the plantation lands on St. Kitts, some having been absent from their estates for as long as six years. They had fire arms and occasionally raided lowland plantations." Richardson (1983)



It is remarkable that Marcus and his gang were able to resist slavery for many years by existing as runaways or maroons. What was particularly impressive was how they were able to survive and evade capture on such a tiny island like St. Kitts, even past emancipation in 1834. Richardson gives some insight as to how Marcus and his colleagues may have accomplished this feat of survival.

“The longevity of Markus’s band had to depend upon constant movement in order to avoid capture, since St. Kitts lacked the vast interior expanses of rugged, forested terrain of the larger islands.”
Richardson (1983)

Marcus was eventually captured on 18 August, 1834 (Hubbard, 2002).

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Place of Memory: Stapleton Estate

Location: St. Peter



Stapleton Estate Yard

Description: Stapleton Estate in St. Peter was just one of several estates owned by the Stapleton family. This particular estate is special as it was part of the original Fountain Estate which belonged to the famous French Governor De Poincy.

Significance:

- Stapleton Estate is place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. Enslaved Africans were used to construct the sugar works as well as the living quarters of the estate owners. The wealth generated from Stapleton Estate was generated from the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. The sugarcane was cultivated, harvested, and processed by the enslaved Africans.
- Stapleton Estate is a place of memory associated with resistance and revolt of the enslaved Africans against their condition of slavery. Many references were made by Governor Stapleton of what was termed 'petit maroonage' of the enslaved Africans on the Stapleton Estate.

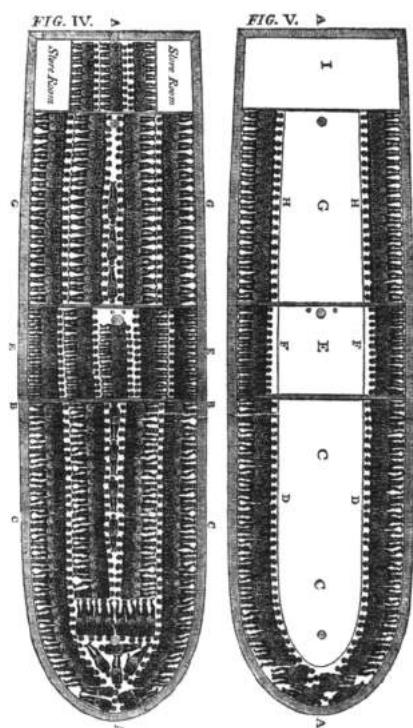
Historical Background:



The Stapleton Estate yard has great historical and cultural value to the local African descendants, the British, and also the French. The estate was originally owned by the French from 1625 to 1690 when they were eventually driven from the island. It was part of the Fountain Estate belonging to French Governor De Poincy. After the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the British officially took full possession of the island and, consequently, the estate. Both the French and the British used the estate for sugar production. Likewise, both powers used African slave labour to cultivate sugar on the estate. This estate became known as Stapleton Estate because Dame Frances Stapleton, through a series of strategic marriages and legal maneuvering, purchased 200 acres of the original Fountain Estate for £3,400 in 1726. Dame Frances Stapleton died twenty years later, in 1746. The estate then came into the possession of her descendant, Catherine Stapleton after much legal maneuvering and harassment. When Catherine Stapleton died on August 28th, 1815, the plantation was willed to Lord Combermere and Rev. William Cotton. Lord Combermere eventually obtained full possession of the property and he increased its holdings by purchasing the nearby Parry Estate. The property then passed to Lord Combermere's son, Wellington Henry, who then transferred it to his younger son Colonel R.S.G. Stapleton-Cotton. In 1920, the size of the Stapleton plantation in St. Christopher was 716 acres. In the 1970's the estate was acquired by the state through the government's nationalization of the sugar industry.

Events that occurred on the Stapleton Estate provide some excellent examples of small scale, covert ways the enslaved Africans demonstrated their resistance to the condition of slavery.

Although slaves themselves were, in legal terms, property, they frequently undercut the claims of their owners and other planters to the sanctity of property by stealing or destroying their goods. In May 1723, overseer Timothy Tyrrel informed Stapleton that "the still house by the camp is burnt down and suppos'd to be burnt on purpose, by Wells' negroes", referring to the

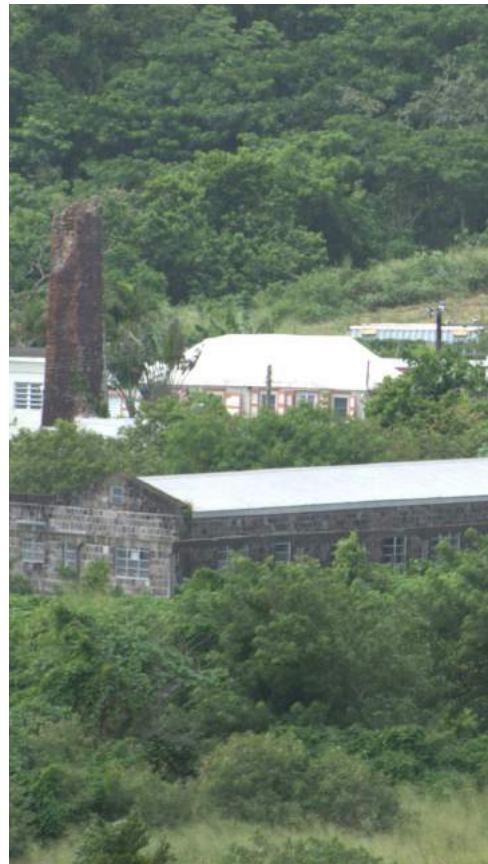




slaves of a neighbouring planter. Another Stapleton slave, Pompey, “was cut to pieces stealing corn” from a nearby estate, and Marcellus stole a piece of pork from a neighbouring plantation. These actions may seem rather trivial, but for slaves to leave their quarters, enter the grounds of another estate, and make off with even small amounts of a white man’s property actually represented considerable risk. That slaves were willing to risk severe punishment or even execution for such small gains adds another dimension to the more overt forms of resistance represented by those who ran away or killed themselves or others.

The concept of petit maroonage may not be familiar to most. Evidence of such demonstrations of resistance by enslaved Africans on St. Kitts is just as elusive. However, the Stapleton Estate provides some records of this type of resistance.

The Stapleton correspondence illuminates the practice of so-called petit maroonage, the process by which some slaves ran away from plantations, not in hope of permanently escaping bondage, but simply seeking a



respite from unremitting work or a temporary escape from a particularly onerous task, a time of poor rations, an anticipated punishment, or a quarrel with a fellow slave. As Keith Mason has noted, “fleeing the plantation...required a great deal of courage, initiative and planning. It meant cutting oneself off from family, kin and friends”, the relationships which were an individual slave’s greatest source of happiness and a haven from the harshness of daily life.

The Stapleton plantation’s accounts from 1725 to 1726 list twenty-six slaves having run away, one in eight of the estate’s labourers. All but one were returned to the plantation, either because they chose to return to reunite with loved ones, or could not find subsistence in the hills, or because they were captured and as they had not been long absent nor committed any crime against the person or property of a white man or woman, were brought back to their owner rather than executed. But their absence, however long it persisted, resulted in the plantation being under-staffed and its productive capacity undercut. A number of these runaways, unusually, were women, who were valued as a source of reproductive as well as productive labour, or came from the ranks of more experienced labourers, whose absence was particularly damaging.



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HUMAN RIGHTS



During the period of slavery, the Europeans were fully aware of the basic rights and liberties that all people were entitled to. Philosophers such as John Locke argued so convincingly about these ‘human rights’ that the ideology influenced the American Revolution and the French Revolution. The rights to own property; the right to move about freely; the right to get protection from laws; the right to life – these human rights were denied of the enslaved Africans. (John Locke was one of the first to coin the term (human rights). The question may be asked as to why the white Europeans and Americans enslaved the Africans and robbed them of the same human rights that were the pillars on which the ‘New Britain’, the ‘New France’, and the new America were eventually built upon. The answer may lie in the fact that the white advocates of slavery did not consider the Africans they enslaved as humans. This manner of thinking gave the advocates of slavery the rationale they desired to justify enslaving large populations of Africans thereby robbing said people of their ‘human rights’.

On St. Kitts and Nevis, there are places of memory that remind us of how our ancestors suffered as they were deprived of their human rights. Places such as Independence Square in Basseterre and Crosses Alley in Charlestown are sites where the enslaved Africans were paraded and sold as livestock. Some plantations such as McDowell’s Estate in St. Peter, St. Kitts and Mountravers Estate in St. Thomas, Nevis, bear testimony of the horrific treatment meted out to the enslaved Africans by their white masters. There is also the site of Sir Thomas Warner’s landing in Old Road, St. Thomas Parish, St. Kitts, which reminds us of how slavery got introduced to these two islands.

The court house in St. Kitts and also the one in Nevis (though the one in Nevis is not included here) are places of memory that chronicle the transition from the point when the courts provided no relief for the plight of the enslaved Africans, to the point where history-changing cases and events led to the said courts enforcing laws that sought to protect the human rights of the enslaved Africans. Presently, the court house in Basseterre bears the name of an illustrious descendant of the very enslaved Africans that were at first (and for a very long time) denied protection of their human rights by the said court.

On the more positive extreme, there are places of memory on both islands that remind us of individuals who were sensitive to, and in some cases, dedicated much of their lives towards the struggle for the rights of the enslaved Africans to exist as free people. The Anglican Church in St. John Parish, St. Kitts, reminds us of James Ramsey. Lawyer Stephen’s Cave in St. Peter reminds us of James Stephen – both of these men resided in St. Kitts at some point in their lives and were instrumental in bringing an end to slavery not just in St. Kitts and Nevis, but, in all of the British colonies. The Cottle Church in Nevis reminds us of how Mr. John Cottle, an Anglican planter, had a church built on his estate in St. James by enslaved Africans for the service of enslaved Africans. Challengers Village is a place of memory that is the first example of Kittitians and Nevisians exercising the right to own property. The Moravian Church and the Methodist Church in St. Georges Parish, St. Kitts are also places of memory where white individuals, following their Christian principles, displayed sensitivity to some of the human rights of the enslaved Africans. There is the little known, yet significant story of John Claver of Estridge Estate. Finally, the Golden Rock Estate shines like a beacon as a place of memory associated with the human rights of the enslaved Africans as it has there that the Declaration of Emancipation was read to finally free the enslaved Africans.



Independence Square and Surrounding Houses

Location: Basseterre, St. George



Independence Square, Basseterre

Description: A 3-acre (approx.) area of land where the enslaved Africans sold what they planted, and where tradition holds that the enslaved were sold to planters. Some of the surrounding buildings were used as holding houses for the slaves prior to auction.

Significance:

- The Africans were displayed and sold like livestock in this public square. The buildings surrounding Independence Square are also places of memory linked to the deprivation of the human rights of the enslaved Africans. The enslaved were stored bound in the basements of some buildings surrounding the square. In this condition of confinement, the enslaved Africans were denied the right to move about freely.

Historical Background:

Independence Square was previously known as Pall Mall Square. Few, however, are aware that it was known as “The Pasture” before it was even called Pall Mall Square. Charles Dickens’ ‘All the Year Round’ highlighted this fact in an 1891 article entitled ‘A Famous West India Island’.



“There is a square in the middle of the town with an atmosphere of solid respectability about it which whispers of good days gone by. It is now called Pall Mall Square, but in the days of the old sea-dogs it was known as the Pasture. Around an enclosed space, planted with palms, and mango-trees, and tamarinds, and ornamented with a waterless fountain, are gathered the good old houses of Basseterre.” Charles Dickens ‘All the Year Round’ (1891)

Pall Mall Square was purchased by the legislature from His Majesty in 1750. The original parcel of land had a measure of 3 acres 5 perches with a circuit of 456 yards (Inniss, 1985).

The slave laws established by the planters dictated that the enslaved Africans were the chattel or property of their purchaser or owner.

“The negro was defined as chattel and treated as a piece of conveyable property, without rights and without redress.” Richard S. Dunn (1973)

Pall Mall Square was the place where the enslaved Africans were showcased as goods for sale.

“Pall Mall Square was the...site of the slave market. Here the slaves were brought from the ships in the Basseterre roadstead...spruced up and paraded before the...prospective buyers” Inniss (1985)

Some of the buildings around the square were used as holding cells for the enslaved Africans. There are still artifacts in some of these buildings today that were used as implements for binding the enslaved Africans.



Cast iron rings used to keep the enslaved Africans bound. These particular rings are located on the steps leading to the basement storeroom of Domino's Pizza at the T.D.C. Mall.

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Charlestown Slave Market

Location: Charlestown, St. Paul

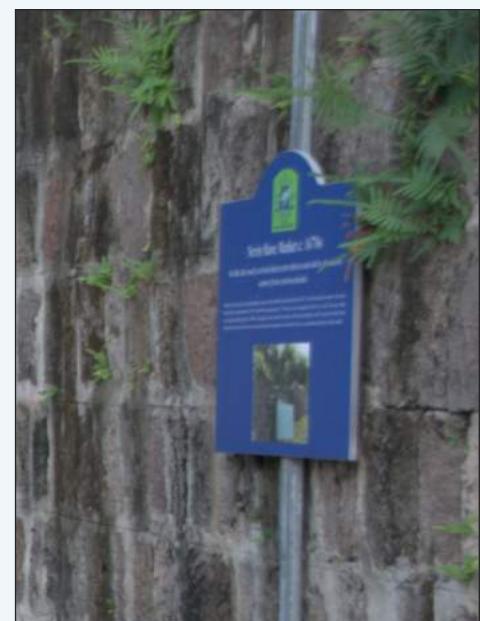


The site of the slave market at Crosse's Alley in Charlestown

Description: Ruins of the slave market remain on site near Crosse's Alley.

Significance:

- At the Charlestown Slave market, the enslaved were displayed and sold like commodities or livestock. The nearby dungeons are also places of memory linked to the deprivation of the human rights of the enslaved Africans. The newly arrived enslaved Africans were stored bound in these inhumane confinements. This is evidence that the enslaved Africans were denied the right to move about freely.



Heritage Slave Sites Inventory



S
St. John's Anglican Church & Cemetery



B
Brimstone Hill Fortress



A
Charles Fort Cleverly Hill



D
Mount Misery



L
Morovian Church
Basseterre



T
Greate Salt Pond



F
Romney Manor



4
Slave Market (Cross A



G
Sir. Thomas Warner
landing site



K
Methodist Church
Basseterre



H
Challenger Village



3
Mountravers Great H



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Government of St. Kitts and Nevis 2012

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Basseterre, St. Kitts

Geographic Position
The island of St. Kitts is located at approximately 17 degrees 10 minutes latitude and 62 degrees and 45 minutes west longitude.

Additions or Corrections
Users noting additions or corrections are asked to indicate the same on the map and send to:
GIS Office
Department of Physical Planning and Environment
Basseterre, St. Kitts

General Information
The representation of road or track is no evidence of title or ownership. When buildings are shown are according to road outline. The representation of boundary line do not necessarily depict the legal boundary on the ground.

Height Depiction
Contours are in meters and shown at 2 and 10 vertical intervals.
The accuracy of contours cannot be guaranteed in areas of high elevation. Contours are subject through buildings for the purpose of continuity only.

Map Sheet History
1st Edition prepared by the GIS Office
Department of Physical Planning and Environment
2nd Edition prepared by the GIS Office
Boden Commercial Development
Wellington Road, Basseterre, St. Kitts
Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis

Grid Data
Coordinate System: WGS 1984 UTM Grid
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
False Easting: 500000
False Northing: 0
Central Meridian: -62.5
Scale: 1:75000
Spheroid: GRS 1980

Prepared By: EPM - SKNHSIS - DPPE - Ministry of Physical Development
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Data Source: National Physical Development Plan 2005
Heritage Sites by SKN National Commission for UNESCO
GIS Office - DPPE - MND

Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis



V
Old Military Road



9
Eden Brown Estate



6
Maroon Hill (Zetlands)



1
Alexander Hamilton House (Museum)



9
St. James Anglican Church (Pot Works)



J
De Poincy Chateau and Fountain Estate



Q
Spooner's Estate Cotton Ginnery



P
Stapleton Estate Yard



5
Fig Tree Anglican Church



R
Estridge Estate Yard



10
Cottle Church and Estate (Round Hill)



4
Alexander Hamilton House (Museum)



Alley)



house



Historical Background:

The following account of the Nevis Slave Market is written with permission from the Nevis Archives:

The British Government decided in the mid 17th century to become involved in the African slave trade to the Americas. St. Kitts and Nevis were settled originally through a quasi-public company called the Society of Adventurers. In 1676, the name of this company was changed to The Royal African Company. The Royal African Company was then granted a monopoly by the Crown for all slave trade to the West Indies. The monopoly remained effective for 20 years, but even after it ceased, The Royal African Company remained the largest slave importer by far in the Caribbean, and continued to bring all its human cargo destined for the Leewards through Nevis until 1730.

In 1676, Nevis became the depot for the slave trade for all the Leeward Islands, and records show that an average, 6, 000 to 7, 000 slaves passed through Nevis every year up to 1730, when the monopoly ceased. Planters from the other Leewards Island complained constantly that Nevis planters, having the first choice, always bought the best slaves, leaving the rejects for the other islands.

The statistics of the Royal African Company indicate that 22% of the slaves being transported on the Middle Passage from Africa to the West Indies died on board ship. As a comparison, 8% of European immigrants to the West Indies died making the journey. John Huffam, the Royal African company agent in Nevis, wrote in 1714 that then slaves arriving in Nevis “were very feeble and weak at their landing and many having such a contraction of nerves by being on board and confined in irons that (they) were hardly capable to walk...”

The pier in Charlestown was then located on the north side of what is now Unella’s Restaurant. Upon arriving, the slaves were washed, rubbed in oil, marched behind a drummer to the public market located behind the Wesleyan Church, and sold at public auction. Buyers from Nevis, St. Kitts, Montserrat, Antigua, Barbuda, and Saba (then English), made bids for them. Because Nevis planters were the first to know of the arrival of African slaves ships, they were always the first on the scene. Although the slaves were first bought for sugar rather than currency, that ceased in the early 1700’s when sugar prices fell on the market. At that time, the average slave was sold for about 30 English pounds here. (Courtesy, the Nevis Archives)

Authorities Consulted

Nevis Archives



McDowall Estate

Location: Canada Hills, St. Peter



Well preserved ruins of the windmill and chimney on McDowall Estate, Canada Hill

Description: The McDowall Estate is a true example of how the contributions or labour of the enslaved Africans created vast wealth for estate owners. The McDowall Estate included all of what is now referred to as the Canada Hills and Canada Estate. The estate was 800 acres in size at a time when others in the area were restricted to 200 acres. Presently, the remains of the wind mill, steam mill and chimney, as well as some other artifacts, can still be found on the Upper Canada Estate.

Significance:

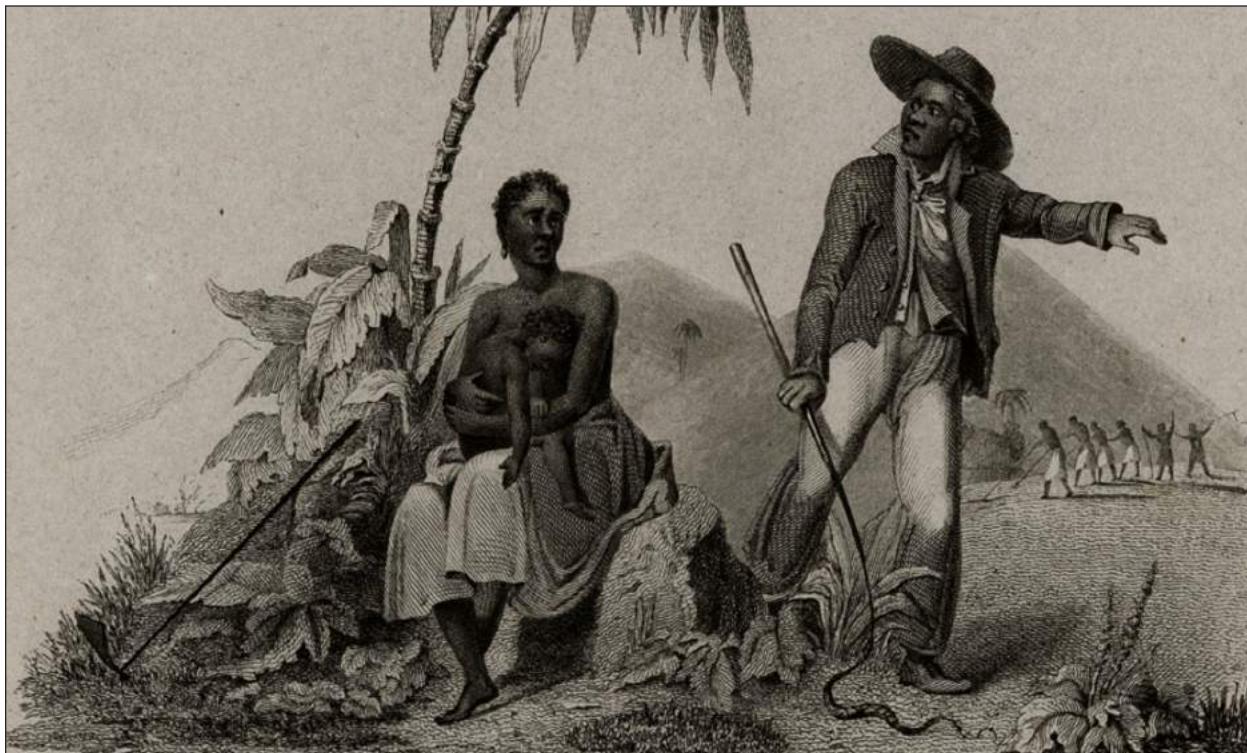
The McDowall Estate is a place of memory associated with the human rights of the enslaved Africans. The treatment administered to the enslaved Africans was inhumane for the most part. Mortality rate among the enslaved was very high on this estate.

Historical Background:

The plantation owners amassed great wealth from the labour of the enslaved Africans. McDowall is a good example of a white man who rose from a humble existence to become one of the wealthiest in Scotland. Nisbet (2007-8), in his investigative work, traced the McDowall's wealth to St. Kitts.

After his harsh apprenticeship on a sugar estate, by 1707 McDowall was developing a small plantation of his own on St. Kitts. For this he had purchased a dozen enslaved negroes, the first of thousands who would pass through the family's hands. These nameless Africans were the hidden source of the family fortune and later of the extensive estate improvements at home. This modest St. Kitts estate was also the first step in the spread of McDowall's family to many other Caribbean islands. (Nisbet, 2007-8)

The plantation on top of Canada Hill is believed to be the initial source of the McDowall's wealth. According to Nisbet (2007-8), by 1712 McDowall was granted a large sugar plantation on a former



French portion at Canada Hills. This was two miles north of the capital Basseterre, and would form the family's core holding for the next century. Initially it contained a house, two sugar mills, boiling house, and still house and required the input of 120 slaves.

The McDowall Estate on Canada Hills was a place of hardship and suffering for the unfortunate enslaved Africans who toiled there. According to Nisbet (2007-8), McDowell cared little for the good health and living conditions of his enslaved. He appeared to have calculated that it was more economical to purchase new enslaved Africans rather than incur expenses to care for the health and improving the living conditions of those currently enslaved.

“Although they did not record specific acts of violence to control their slaves, once abuse resulted in deaths, it could not be concealed. The loss of chattels (slaves and cattle, which were listed together) was an expensive drain on capital and had to be recorded. In the early years of English settlement, St. Kitts had supported an endless variety of high quality crops. However, the intensity of sugar cultivation meant that little soil was spared to allow the labour force to grow their own food. The enslaved were thus largely at the mercy of imports of food and clothing by their masters. As this was a significant expense, it was minimized. In this early period nursing the sick or dying Negroes was rudimentary, and another avoidable expense. McDowall himself favoured employing an old woman, rather than “all the doctors in your country.” The impression is of a situation similar to that of a concentration camp scenario, where economics kept health very finely in the balance. The planters literally had the power of life and death over their workforce, with no fear of legal consequence for lack of care, let alone violence and cruelty.

One of the staple imports to feed the slaves throughout the 18th century was salted herrings from the Clyde estuary in Scotland. Any hiccup in supply, particularly if combined with drought or frequent hurricanes, resulted quickly in deaths. This policy was also applied to the slaves’ accommodation. When his manager suggested improving the “Negro houses”, McDowall strenuously opposed any improvements. This deliberate policy of frugality in food and shelter led to abundant misery, death, and the need to continue buying more slaves to replace the dead.” (Nisbet, 2007-8)



Authorities Consulted

Nisbet, Stuart. ‘The Secret Lives of William McDowall of castle Semple and James Milliken of Kilbarchan’. Renfrewshire Local History Forum Journal. Vol. 14. (2007/8)

Mountravers

Location: St. Thomas



Mountravers Estate Great House

Description: An old sugar estate that was the property of the celebrated Pinney family. The ruin of the Mountravers Great House still stands today. Recent research has also located the estate village where the enslaved Africans lived.

Significance:

Mountravers Estate is place of memory associated with the abuse of the human rights of the enslaved Africans.

Historical Background:

Mountravers Plantation was one of the most significant plantations on Nevis. The successive owners of the estate provide some indication as to its importance. According to Pares (1950), Mountravers had belonged successively to governors Stapleton and Hamilton, and later to the famous Mr. Alderman Oliver. It was later owned by the Pinney family. The estate stayed in the Pinney family until 1802, when John Frederick Pinney offered it for sale to J.H. Clarke for £30,000 sterling. J.H. Clarke initially turned down the offer on account that he was not yet ready to own West Indies property. By the time he had made up his mind to purchase the property in 1807, there was another buyer in the market – the notorious Edward Huggins. What happened next could only be described as a comedy of errors. A Mr. James Tobin, who was the longtime business partner of the Pinneys, sold the estate to Mr. Clarke. At the same time the Pinneys signed an agreement to Edward. Mountravers Estate was sold to two different parties at the same time. After much legal wrangling, the estate finally ended up in the possession of Mr. Edward Huggins.

The enslaved Africans contributed much to the value of Mountravers Estate in ways less obvious than just providing their labour. The final price Mr. Huggins paid for the estate was £35,650. According to Pares (1950), the main reason for the price hike was the fact that Mr. Pinney added a premium on the value of the enslaved Africans on his estates. The enslaved, valued at £65 per head in February 1807, were valued at £70 per head in September 1807. This was owing to the fact that the slave trade was by then abolished. This meant that there would be no new shipment of enslaved Africans. This situation would naturally increase the demand for and value of the enslaved already present on the island.

The new owner of Mountravers Estate, Mr. Edward Huggins, committed an act of cruelty on his enslaved Africans. So gruesome was this act of cruelty, and so scandalous was the way he was later tried and acquitted for his crime against the enslaved, that his notoriety eclipsed the popularity of even Alexander Hamilton and Lady Nelson (in the history of events on Nevis).

The following are extracts of evidence given by witnesses in the case that was presented to the Lords of the Privy Council in England:

John Burke, jun. who stated, that he was present on the 23rd of January: - That he did not count the first lashes, but he counted the next and the following; and he then stated the number of negroes punished, and the number of lashes given to each, as follows: Men, 115, 65, 47, 165, 242, 212, 181, 59 and 187; women, 110, 58, 97, 212, 291, 80, 49, 68, 89 and 56.

The Examination of John Burke, jun. Deputy Secretary of the said Island; upon oath, saith,

That, on Tuesday the 23rd instant, he was standing in the street opposite the house of the Reverend William Green; when he saw Edwards Huggins, sen. esq. and his two sons, Edward and Peter Thomas Huggins, ride by, with a gang of negroes, to the public market-place; from whence the Deponent heard the noise of the cart-whip: That Deponent walked up street, and saw Mr. Huggins, sen. standing by, with two drivers flogging a negro-man, whose name Deponent understood to be Yellow Quashy: That Deponent went into Dr. Crosse's gallery, and sat down: That the two drivers continued flogging the said negro-man for about fifteen minutes: That, as he appeared to be severely whipped, Deponent was induced to count the lashes given the other negroes, being under

an impression that the country would take up the business: That Deponent heard Mr. George Abbot declare, at Dr. Crosse's steps near the market-place, that the first negro had received three hundred and sixty-five lashes: Deponent saith, that Mr. Huggins, sen. gave another negro-man one hundred ad fifteen lashes; to another negro-man sixty-five lashes; to another negro-man forty-seven lashes; to another negro-man one hundred and sixty-five lashes; to another negro-man two hundred and forty-two lashes; to another negro-man two hundred and twelve lashes; to another negro-man one hundred and eighty-one lashes; to another fifty nine lashes; to another negro-man one hundred and eighty-seven lashes; to a woman one hundred and ten lashes; to another woman fifty-eight lashes; to another woman ninety-seven lashes; to another woman two hundred and twelve lashes; to another woman two hundred and ninety-one lashes; to another woman eighty-three lashes; to another woman forty-nine lashes; to another woman sixty-eight lashes; to another woman eighty-nine lashes; and to another woman fifty-six lashes; and that woman who received two hundred and ninety-one lashes appeared young, and was most cruelly flogged: That all the negroes were flogged by two expert whippers.

The fifth witness, William Pemberton, gives some of the names of the enslaved from Mountravers Estate who were flogged at the Slave Market near Dr. Crosse's home in Charlestown. He stated that he saw the driver on the 9th day and the other negroes on the 8th day after the flogging, and that eight of the negroes appeared to have been severely flogged; some were in their own houses, and others in the sick house: That the names of the eight negroes were Quashey, Ned, William Coker, Nellys Juba, Madges Juba, Catharine, Castile, and Range.

Inspite of the account of witnesses, Mr. Edward Huggins was acquitted at trial. The reason he gave for the cruel flogging makes an interesting story of typical resistance. However, the actual reason why Mr. Huggins whipped the unfortunate enslaved Africans so cruelly was because they refused to carry dung.

Authorities Consulted

Pares, Richard. 'A West India Fortune'. (1950)



Landing Site of Sir Thomas Warner

Location: Old Road, St. Thomas



The Wingfield River previously known as the Black River. Sir Thomas Warner landed between this river and the East River in Old Road

Description: The stretch of beach located between Wingfield River and the East River. This is the spot where Sir Thomas Warner landed on St. Kitts on 28th January, 1623. St. Kitts is the first permanent British settlement in the West Indies because of this historic landing.

Significance:

The landing of Sir Thomas Warner may not be readily perceived as a place of memory related to slavery. However, Sir Thomas Warner's landing heralded a new era in the West Indies. He established the very first British settlement and colony in the Caribbean on the island of St. Kitts. He was a pioneer in that his pursuits were not for mineral wealth, but for agricultural interests. His interests were mainly tobacco, and later, sugar cultivation. In the end it was the sugar crop which was responsible for the relocation of numerous Africans to the island of St. Kitts. The terms of engagement for the immigrants from Africa could be summed up in one word – slavery.

Historical Background:

In 1623, an English gentleman from Suffolk landed somewhere between the East River and the Black River in Old Road on the island of St. Kitts (Southey, 1827). This pioneering gentleman was Thomas Warner. His famous landing established St. Christopher as the ‘Mother Colony’ of the British West Indies. In 1625, a Frenchman named Pierre Berlain d’Esnambuc was allowed (by Thomas Warner), to settle in St. Christopher alongside the English. This event established St. Christophe as the ‘Mother Colony’ of the French West Indies as well.

In 1626 the first sixty of what would be thousands of enslaved Africans were brought to St. Christopher on one of Sir Thomas Warner’s ships (Dyde, 2005). Interestingly, 1626 was also the year when the English and French combined their forces and massacred every Kalinago Carib they could find on St. Christopher (save of course, for the most comely of the young females). During this time, the main crop was tobacco. However, in or about the year 1639, the English and French on St. Christopher took a strategic economic decision to place an 18 month ban on the production of tobacco on the island (Hubbard, 2002). This was in response to a situation whereby over production and supply on the world market caused the price of tobacco to fall to unprofitable levels.

1639 was also the year when Governor Philippe de Longvilliers de Poincy arrived on St. Christopher. The French (who were permitted to settle St. Christopher by Sir Thomas Warner) introduced sugar cane cultivation in 1640 and sugar production around the year 1643 (Hubbard, 2002). The English followed around the year 1646 (Dyde, 2005). Though most historians differ on the exact year in the 1640’s when sugar started in St. Christophe or St. Christopher, they all agree that the French pioneered its production. Historians also agree that the introduction of sugar to St. Christopher resulted in the mass inflow of enslaved Africans to St. Christopher. The French were notably more aggressive in developing a system of slavery in St. Christophe. By the year 1671, French St. Christophe had a population of 3600 whites and approximately 4500 enslaved Africans. In the same year, English St. Christopher had a mere 1000 whites and 900 enslaved Africans (Dyde, 2005).

The site of Sir Thomas Warner’s landing is therefore significant. It is associated with the man who first brought enslaved Africans to the island in 1626; the man who encouraged the French to co-colonize the island and introduce sugar in 1640. This crop, in turn, led to the mass inflow of Africans into the island under conditions of slavery.

Authorities Consulted

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Basseterre Court House

Location: East Independence Square Street, Basseterre, St. George



Figure 18 shows the court house in Basseterre now called the Sir Lee L Moore Judicial Complex. Sir Lee was the descendant of enslaved Africans.

Description: The court house has been demolished and rebuilt several times. The present court house carries the name of a brilliant lawyer who was a descendant of the very enslaved Africans who were prosecuted and persecuted by the court in their day. The present court house was modeled after the original architectural design of the previous court house.

Significance:

The court was the enforcer of the laws (or lack of laws) relating to the human rights of the enslaved Africans. In most cases there were no laws that protected or recognized the right of the enslaved Africans to life. Many cases ended in death sentences for the enslaved Africans and in the acquittal of whites who killed enslaved Africans.



Historical Background:

In 1727, Basseterre became the capital of the island, but the courts were not moved there until 1750, the same year Pall Mall Square was established. The Basseterre Court House, with backing of the Militia, enforced a series of laws that directly influenced the human rights and survival of the enslaved Africans. These were the ‘Slave Laws’, ‘The Slave Amelioration Act’, ‘The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act’, and ‘The Emancipation Act’.

According to James Stephen (1824), the Slave Laws were just a set of rules created, accepted and enforced by the planter class, with the support of the island courts. Stephen, in his famous published work ‘The Slavery of the British West India Colonies Delineated’, further maintained that the Slave Laws existed outside of the laws of Britain. The Slave Laws enforced by the court in Basseterre deprived the enslaved of all his basic human rights. The following are but an extract of some of these Slave Laws or rules:

The slave was the movable property of his master.

Children born of Negro parents followed the condition of the mother (they were the movable property of the master).

Slaves could never testify against their masters.

If a slave struck his master or one of the family (of the master) so as to produce a bruise or shedding blood ...he had to be put to death.

Any runaway slave...suffered the penalty of having his ears cut off and being branded
(Woodson, 1916)

The slave codes were gradually amended overtime. The amendments were enacted to achieve two main goals. First - to make the laws in the Colonies more aligned with those in Britain regarding the treatment of the enslaved Africans. Second - to bring about some measurable improvement in the conditions of the enslaved Africans. Southey (1827) in his ‘Chronological History of the West Indies’ (vol. 3) provides some illustrations:

“At St. Christopher’s, Mr. Jordan Burke was indicted for cutting off one ear, and slitting the other, of his female slave, Clarissa. Upon the 8th of March, he was fined £50 currency for the offence”

“Upon the same island, August the 24th, Mr. Wadham Strode was indicted for cutting off one ear, and slitting the other, of his Negro-man, Peter, May 11th 1785. He was, fined £100 currency for the offence.” (Southey, 1827, pp. 7)

According to Southey, the amendments to the Slave Laws did little to address the suppression of the human rights of the enslaved Africans. However, the amendments achieved progress in legislating enactments that were closer to the laws used in Britain.

“These two masters (Mr. Jordan Burke and Mr. Wadham Stroke) were convicted of cutting off the ears of their Negroes, and fined, the one £100 currency, the other £50 – not on the notion on any civil rights in the sufferer, but that unusual and shocking cruelty, even to brute animals,...of a nature offensive to the public eye, was indictable as a misdemeanor in England;” (Southey, 1827, pp. 8)

The general treatment of the enslaved Africans was not addressed by the court in Basseterre until 1798. During this year, the Legislature of the Leeward Islands met in St. Christopher and passed an act to ‘ameliorate the conditions of the enslaved Africans’. This act became known throughout the West Indies as the ‘Amelioration Act’, or, more commonly, ‘Melioration’.

The foremost motive behind the Melioration Act of 1798 was not to achieve better conditions for the enslaved Africans for the sake of the enslaved Africans. Rather, the true reason for the Melioration Act was purely economic, not benevolence.

Abolitionists such as James Stephen, James Ramsey, Wilberforce and others brought horrid cases of abuse and mortality from the court in St. Kitts to the attention of powerful Lords of the Privy Council and the House of Commons in England such as Lord Bathurst. Eventually, they convinced the lords that the death rate among the enslaved Africans was exceeding the high cost of purchasing fresh slaves. Many planters believed that it was cheaper to buy new slaves than to breed them. James Stephen, in particular, convinced the authorities in England that it made better economic sense for planters to improve the conditions of their current slaves, thereby reducing the high death rate and reducing the cost of purchasing replacements. The Melioration Act of 1798 was therefore passed for economic purposes. The enslaved Africans only benefited because improvement in their condition and lengthening their lifespan was necessary for stemming the high labour replacement cost of the planters.

Further efforts of the abolitionists led to the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. The courthouse in St. Kitts also enforced the Registry of Slaves Act along with the act to end the slave trade. This piece of legislation required the planters to keep an inventory or register of the enslaved Africans on their estates. It also resolved that any enslaved African not found on any slave registry was deemed to be free.

Finally, in 1834, the courthouse in Basseterre enforced the Emancipation Act. This act meant that the enslaved Africans were ‘free’ or emancipated from the conditions of slavery.

As in previous acts, the Emancipation Act used language that on face value appeared to favour the enslaved Africans. A closer examination of the provisions of the act would reveal that measures were put in place to protect the economic interests of the planters. One such measure was a compensation package for the planters for their losses. Another measure was to insert a clause in the Emancipation Act that bound the Africans to four years of indentured service on the sugar estates of the planters. The planters were given two golden parachutes to cushion the impact of emancipation on their wallets. Firstly, the enslaved Africans were compelled and legally bound to offer four more years of labour. Secondly, the planters received monetary compensation packages for their ‘losses’.

Authorities Consulted

Dyde, Brian. ‘Out of a Crowded Vagueness: A History of the Islands of St. Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla’. (2005)

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Woodson, Carter Godwin ‘The Journal of Negro History’. (1916)



Anglican Church

Location: St. John



The Parish Church at St. John where James Ramsey served as Rector

Description: The St. John Anglican Church was built in the sugar era. The church is noted for its connection to one of the earliest and most forceful abolitionists, James Ramsey, who as rector, opened the doors of the Anglican Church to the enslaved Africans. This predates the arrival of the Methodists and Moravians to St. Kitts. James Ramsey was also a Surgeon, and he offered his services to the enslaved Africans on the sugar estates. He was very sympathetic to their needs. Later in his life he returned to England and dedicated the rest of his life to the abolition of slavery.

Significance:

St. John's Anglican Church is a place of memory associated with the human rights of the enslaved Africans. James Ramsey as rector treated the enslaved Africans as humans when he opened the doors of the St. Johns Anglican Church to them. As surgeon for many of the estates, he treated many enslaved Africans, saving their lives and upholding their right to life. In his final years, as an abolitionist, he argued for the abolition of slavery, and fought for the right of the enslaved Africans to freedom and liberty.

Historical Background:

The St. John Anglican Church dates back to the colonial days of slavery. The church itself is a testimony to the contribution and productivity of the enslaved Africans who built it. The most significant relationship between the St. John Anglican Church and the experiences of the enslaved Africans on St. Kitts lies not with the building itself, but with James Ramsey who served as its Rector from 1762 (Watt, 1994) until he was forced to quit the island in 1777. As rector, he acknowledged the enslaved Africans as human beings with human rights. His ecclesiastic and social work with the enslaved Africans predates those of the Moravians and Methodists by several years. He opened the church to both black and white, and suffered the wrath of the planters on St. Kitts for his contribution to the cultural adaptation of the enslaved Africans.

Ramsey also worked on several plantations as a surgeon. The medical care he gave to the enslaved contributed to their survival and was testament to

his concern for the human rights of the enslaved Africans. As he visited plantation after plantation on St. Kitts to care for the sick and maimed enslaved Africans, he documented his observations and their sufferings. This first-hand account of the disregard the planters had for the human rights of the enslaved Africans gave Ramsey the ammunition he required to launch what most considered the foremost and most potent campaign against the slavery of the Africans.



In 1784, Ramsey revised and published ‘An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies’. According to the Dictionary of National Biography (1896), Ramsay’s publication of this essay was the most important event in the early history of the anti-slavery movement. He is credited with introducing Wilberforce into the anti-slavery movement. His anti-slavery activities predate those of the Clapham Sect. James Ramsey did not live long enough to witness the eventual abolition of slavery and subsequent emancipation of the enslaved Africans, for whose cause he fought tirelessly. He died in 1789, fifty-six years after his birth in 1733. Ramsey’s experience on St. Kitts caused him to start a movement that led to the eventual end of slavery not just in St. Kitts, but the entire British Empire.

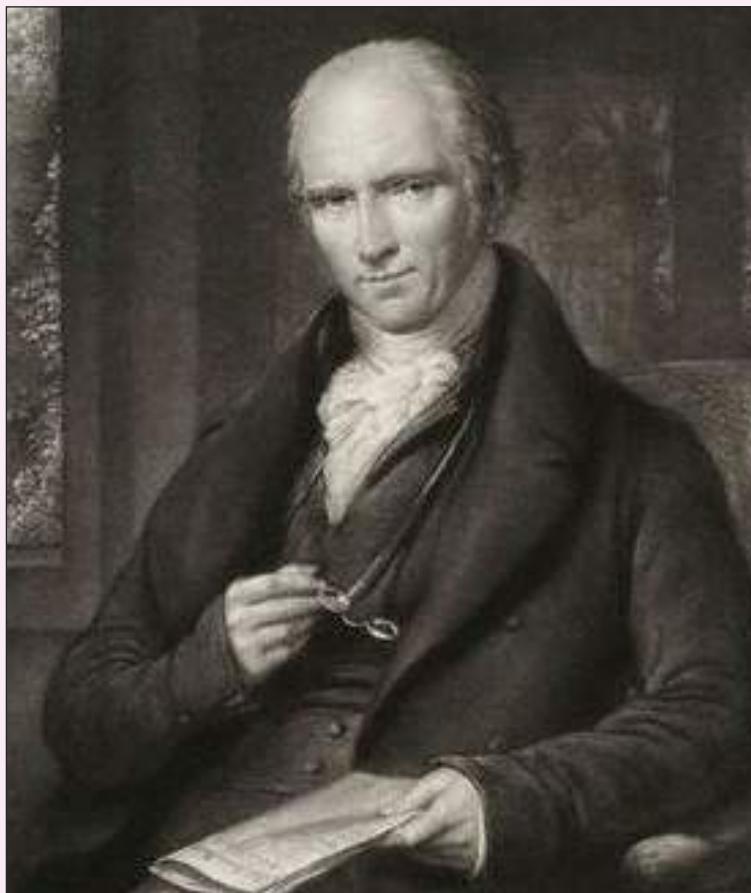
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Watt, Sir James. ‘Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine Vol. 87: James Ramsey – The Navy and the Slave Trade’. (1994)

Lawyer Stephen Cave

Location: Olivees Mountain, St. Peter



Description: Lawyer Stephen's Cave is located on a ridge in the Olivees Mountain. Lawyer Stephens Cave was actually carved out of the side of the ridge and it served as his home. His efforts were most instrumental in bringing about the abolition of the British slave trade and later full emancipation of the enslaved Africans.

Significance:

Lawyer Stephen's Cave is a place of memory associated with the human rights of the enslaved Africans. Lawyer Stephen dedicated his life and legal skills to the fight for freedom and liberty of the enslaved Africans. His efforts proved most successful in bringing an end to slavery and securing the human rights of the enslaved Africans.

Historical Background:

James Stephen was born in Poole, Dorset, on 30th June 1758. He began his career reporting on parliamentary proceedings. Later he held an official post in St. Kitts, a British colony. During a visit to Barbados he witnessed the trial of four black slaves for murder. The trial, which found the men guilty as charged, was considered by many to be a grave miscarriage of justice. The men were sentenced to death by burning, and Stephen's revulsion at both the trial and the verdict led him to vow never to keep slaves himself, and to ally himself with the abolitionist movement.

Stephen was a skilled lawyer whose specialty was the laws governing Great Britain's foreign trade. These legal skills proved to be invaluable in his fight for the human rights of the enslaved Africans. He came to be regarded as the chief architect of the 1807 Slave Trade Abolition Act, providing William Wilberforce with the legal mastermind he needed for its drafting. To close off loopholes pointed out by some critics, he became a Director of the Africa Institution for the Registration of Slaves, through which he advocated a centralized registry, administered by the British government, which would furnish precise statistics on all slave births, deaths, and sale, so that "any unregistered black would be presumed free". Though he introduced many successful ideas to strengthen the legal success of the abolitionist cause, this mechanism, the central registry, which was, he believed, "the only effective means to prevent British colonists from illicitly importing African slaves", was never taken up. His last public engagement was a speaking engagement at a meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society at Exeter Hall in 1832. From 1808 to 1815 James Stephen served as a Member of Parliament, and in 1811 Master in Chancery. In 1826, he issued an "Address to the People and Electors of England", in which, echoing his speeches, he had some success in urging the election of Members of Parliament who would not be "tools of the West India Interest", paving the way for the second Abolition Bill which succeeded in 1833. James Stephen died on 10th October, 1832 – two years before emancipation in 1834.

His published works included:

The Slavery of the British West Indies (1824)

The Crisis of the Sugar Colonies (1802)

Reasons for Establishing a Registry of Slaves (1815)

An Inquiry Into the Right and Duty of Compelling Spain to Relinquish Her Slave Trade in Northern Africa (1816)

England Enslaved by Her Own Slave Colonies: An Address to the People and Electors of England (1826)

Authorities Consulted

Wikipedia, Free Online Encyclopedia. 'Biography of James Stephens'



Cottle Church and Estate

Location: Round Hill, St. James



Well preserved ruins of Cottle Church

Description: A church commissioned by Mr. Cottle on his sugar estate. He allowed enslaved Africans to attend. He was one of the first planters to do such a thing for the benefit of the enslaved Africans.

Significance:

- Cottle Church is place of memory associated with the fight for the human rights of the enslaved Africans.





Historical Background:

Mr. Thomas John Cottle built a church on his estate at Round Hill chiefly for the benefit and edification of the enslaved Africans (Walker, anon). This single act of acknowledgement and care for the human rights of the enslaved Africans made Cottle's name synonymous with care and compassion for the enslaved population of Nevis. The church on Cottle's Round Hill estate was opened for worship on May 5th, 1824.

Authorities Consulted

Walker, G.P.J. 'Cottle Church: An Incident in the Life of Pre-Emancipation Nevis'. (Anon)



Challenger's Village

Location: Trinity



Challengers Village, the first free slave village on St. Kitts

Description: Challenger's Village is situated immediately east of Stone Fort River. This village was the first free village of the formerly enslaved Africans on the island. It therefore has high historical and cultural value to citizens of St. Kitts, the descendants of the slaves.

Significance:

•Challenger's Village is a place of memory associated with the human rights of the enslaved Africans. When John Challenger, a planter, offered the newly emancipated Africans a portion of his land for purchase, he empowered them to exercise their human right to own property.



Historical Background:



Even though the enslaved Africans were declared emancipated on 1st August, 1834, they were still deprived of the basic human right to own land (property). Mr. John Challenger offered the newly-emancipated people a plot of land to purchase for their own use. This was unprecedented and historical. This gesture not only recognized the human right of the emancipated people to own land, but it afforded them the opportunity to do so.

The Declaration of Emancipation did not immediately end slave labour for the people of African descent. For four years, up to 1838, they were bound by law to continue to labour on the planters' estates for the benefit of the planters. Even after 1838, the newly-emancipated people had to work on the estates in St. Kitts under terms and conditions which were more beneficial to the planters. This was because of the fact that the newly-emancipated people were landless. The land purchased by the newly-emancipated people from Mr. Challenger enabled them to be the sole beneficiaries of the fruits of their labour, their productivity and contribution.

It was very challenging for the newly emancipated people to adapt to post emancipation conditions. On paper, emancipation meant freedom for the enslaved Africans. However, the reality was different. The newly emancipated people were landless. Therefore, their survival was still greatly influenced by the land owners – the plantocracy. Mr. John Challenger offered the newly-emancipated Africans a portion of his Estate to purchase. This act of generosity empowered these particular emancipated Africans and helped them to better adapt to post emancipation conditions, as well as to have more control over their destiny and their survival.

Authorities Consulted

St. Christopher National Trust



Moravian Church

Location: Basseterre, St. George



Moravian Church, Basseterre

Description: The church in Basseterre is located at the top of College Street to the west Taylor's Range is to the North, and Victoria Road to the East.

Significance:

- The Moravians were one of the first groups to acknowledge the human rights of the enslaved Africans. They were the first to treat the enslaved Africans as humans. They did this by preaching to the enslaved Africans and by trying to convert them to Christianity. For this reason, the Moravian Church is a place of memory of the earliest religious group that acknowledged the human rights of the enslaved Africans.
- The Moravians' attempt to convert the enslaved Africans to Christianity was supported by some planters. These planters believed that conversion to Christianity would pacify the enslaved Africans, thereby reducing the incidents of resistance and revolt against slavery. In this sense, the Moravian church is a place of memory associated with the resistance and revolt of the enslaved Africans. The planters allowed, and in some cases facilitated, their interaction with the enslaved Africans because it was thought that the work of the Moravians resulted in reduced instances of resistance and revolt.

Historical Background:

- *The enslaved Africans engaged themselves in the religious activities of the Moravians. This was a display of the Africans' ability to adapt to the new world. The relationship with the Moravians was a boost to the soul and survival of the enslaved Africans. This contrasted sharply with the pain and suffering experienced in their relationship with the planters.*



It is interesting to note that it was a planter, who owned an estate in Palmetto Point, who invited the Moravians (also referred to then as the United Brethren) to St. Kitts. This gentleman was Mr. John Gardiner. He was also a lawyer by profession. Mr. Gardiner had previously observed the work of the Moravians in Antigua.

The Moravians acknowledged the enslaved Africans as human beings with souls that could be converted to Christianity. Before they were approached by Mr. Gardiner, the Moravians had reportedly converted thousands of enslaved Africans in Antigua to Christianity.

This effort by the Moravians convinced Mr. Gardiner that the enslaved Africans were

capable of accepting Christian rules and guidelines of morality and practising it in their everyday lives. However, one aspect of the success of the Moravians with the enslaved Africans in Antigua may have been more inspirational to Mr. Gardener's decision to woo the Moravians to St. Kitts. This was the observation by the Antiguan planters that the converted enslaved Africans were more faithful workers and less prone to rebellion than enslaved Africans who were not converted to Christianity.

Mr. Gardiner was very much inspired by the Moravians' influence on the behavior of the enslaved Africans in Antigua. In 1774, he visited the office of the Moravian Church in London and requested that a Moravian Mission similar to the one in Antigua be established in St. Kitts. Mr. Gardiner was so convinced that the Kittitian planter had much to benefit from the conversion of the enslaved Africans to Christianity that he took the lead and hosted the Moravians on his own plantation at Palmetto Point (Dyde, 2005).

The first Moravians arrived in St. Kitts on 14 June 1777. The first missionaries to arrive were a German by the name of Daniel Gothwalt and an Englishman named James Burkely. In November 1779, two female enslaved Africans, *Catto* and *Present* had the honour of being the first converts of the Moravian church in St. Kitts (Dyde, 2005). Progress to convert more enslaved Africans met



with initial resistance. However, Governor-General Sir William Burt, a Kittitian by birth, welcomed the Moravians' efforts. This support from the Governor melted the cold reception of the Kittitian planters.

The planters stood to gain greater control and benefit from their enslaved Africans who were converted by the Moravians, particularly because of the 'moral duties' the Moravians were instilling in the mind and lives of the enslaved Africans. These duties included industry and attention to the interests of their masters (Dyde, 2005). The Moravians evidently did not pose a threat to slavery rather, they encouraged the enslaved Africans to be better servants to the planters.

The Moravians also provided some benefits for the enslaved Africans. For instance, the Moravians also preached other 'moral duties' to the enslaved Africans. These included frugality and family. The Moravians also taught the enslaved Africans to read and write. The ability to read and write was viewed as power. The enslaved Africans were afforded an opportunity to socialize with the whites in a new way and on a different plane with the Moravians than they ever could with the planters. In those days, close association with white people was also seen as access to power. All these indirect benefits positively impacted the adaptation and survival of the enslaved Africans.

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Hubbard, Vincent. 'A History of St. Kitts: The Sweet Trade'. (2002)



Methodist Church

Location: Basseterre



Methodist Church, Basseterre

Description: *The present church.*

Significance:

- *The Methodists, who came to St. Kitts after the Moravians, were also one of the first groups to acknowledge the human rights of the enslaved Africans. They, like the Moravians, also treated the enslaved Africans as humans. For this reason, the Methodist Church is a place of memory of the earliest sympathizers of the enslaved Africans and of the few who struggled for the human rights of the enslaved Africans.*
- *The Methodists attempted to teach the enslaved Africans Christian principles. Planters who supported this effort of the Methodists did so because of their view that conversion to Christianity would pacify the slaves and reduce incidents of resistance and revolt of the enslaved Africans.*
- *The religious and limited academic education that the Methodists imparted to the enslaved Africans aided their adaptation to the new world and their survival of slavery.*



Historical Background:

The Methodists arrived in St. Kitts in January, 1787. This inaugural visit was led by Thomas Coke, an English Methodist Bishop, who was also John Wesley's Superintendent in America (Dyde, 2005). He was accompanied by William Hammet, John Clarke, and John Baxter. The Kittitian planters recognized that the Methodists had a similar set of rules to the Moravians. Also, like the Moravians, the Methodists had more interest in converting the enslaved Africans to Christianity than in the abolition of slavery. As a matter of fact, the one thing about the system of Kittitian slavery that the Methodists were most passionate about appeared to have been the abolition of the Sunday market. The Methodists were therefore allowed to practice their faith.

Thus, in 1794, a wooden chapel was built in Old Road, along with a school room. This structure predates the first Methodist chapel built in Basseterre in 1817. The significance of the work of the Methodists is that they addressed some of the basic human rights of the enslaved Africans. By acknowledging the enslaved Africans as people with souls that can be converted to Christianity, the Methodists, like the Moravians before them, were demonstrating that the enslaved Africans were more than just chattel property, or beasts of burden, as the planters treated them. Additionally, the



addition of a school room to the chapel indicates that the Methodists empowered the enslaved Africans by teaching them to read and write.

The work of the Methodists in teaching and preaching to the enslaved Africans was not only significant with regards to addressing some aspects of the human rights of the slaves, but their work was also significant with respect to the cultural adaptation of the enslaved Africans. Evidence of the involvement of the Methodists in the lives of enslaved Africans, or of the interest the enslaved Africans had in the work of the Methodists, could be seen in the number and race of the persons who were registered Methodists over the years following their arrival in 1787:

1789, two years after their arrival in St. Kitts – 700 ‘hearers’

1794, when they built their first chapel in Old Road, there were – 1423 acknowledged Methodists, of whom only 13 were white.

1817, when the first wooden chapel was erected in Basseterre – 3000 registered Methodists, of whom only 50 were white.

1825, the opening of the present stone chapel in Basseterre (construction begun in 1822) there were – 5000 hearers, the majority of preachers being free coloureds.

1830, four years prior to emancipation, there were – 3104 enslaved Africans, 713 free coloureds, and 75 whites who were members of the Methodist church on St. Kitts.

Authorities Consulted

Dyde, Brian. ‘Out of a Crowded Vagueness: A History of the Islands of St. Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla’. (2005)

Inniss, Sir Probyn. ‘Methodism in St. Kitts and Nevis 1787-2006’. (2006)



Estridge Estate

Location: Estridge, Christ Church



Ruins of a magnificent windmill at Estridge Estate

Description: An old sugar estate that was originally owned by the Estridge family. During the sugar era, the estate was described by observers as one of the most magnificent and prosperous. Presently, there are ruins and artifacts on the estate that testify to the grandeur and prosperity of the estate in the sugar era. There exist remains of the wind mill, steam mill and chimney, boiling house and dwelling house.

Significance:

- There is an interesting incident that occurred on the Estate that drew international attention. It involved a formerly enslaved African, one John Claver, who escaped and ran away from Estridge Estate. Though it was post-emancipation, the reason cited was inhumane treatment by the overseer.
- Estridge is a place of memory associated with the human rights of the enslaved Africans. In the case involving John Claver, an enslaved African who ran away to escape slave conditions on Estridge Estate, an effort was made to secure his human right to freedom and he was acknowledged as a British subject.



Historical Background:

There once lived on Estridge Estate an enslaved African by the name of John Claver. His story portrays an incredible twist of fate and is an account of resistance, survival and the efforts made by a white British man to secure the human rights of an enslaved African.

John Claver appeared in person at the British Commission on the 12th day of June, 1844, before Edward W. H. Schenley, Her Britannic Majesty's Commissioner and Acting Judge, in the Mixed British and Netherlands Court for the repression of the Slave Trade, and under the Treaty of the 4th of May, 1818, established in Surinam. Mr. Schenley explained that Claver stated himself to be a British subject, and as such claimed the intervention of Her Majesty's Government to rescue him from the present condition of slavery, into which he alleges, that he has been unjustly sold and is now held. The following is John Claver's story as told by Mr. Schenley.

"Upon being questioned touching the matter, he deposed, that his name is John Claver, a native of the island of St. Christophers, where he was born a slave, and bred as a mason, upon the estate named Estridge, that belonged to a Mr. Estridge (so pronounced by deponent i.e. Claver), near Negro Town. Does not know what his age is (his appearance indicating about 40), but that his name, and the registry of his birth, will be found in the list of the slaves that belonged to the above estate. That the said estate passed into the possession of a person named George Parsons, owing to whose cruelties, deponent (Claver), together with three other slaves, named Sandy,

William and Gingo, stole a boat from the shore, with which they effected their escape from St. Christophers to the neighbouring Dutch island of St. Eustatius. Cannot state the year of this occurrence, but knows that the name of the Dutch Governor at the time was Spengler, by whose orders deponent and his companions were seized and held in confinement for nearly a year. That during the above time, two of his companions, William and Gingo succeeded in making their escape out of confinement, and, as deponent heard, got back to St. Christophers. That Mr. Van Raders became Governor of St. Eustatius about that time, when he ordered deponent and Sandy to be put to labour as land or Government negroes, upon the public works. That deponent (Claver) continued to be so employed until Mr. H. R. Hayunga was about to repair from St. Eustatius to Surinam, when deponent (Claver) was sold as a slave by Mr. Van Raders to Mr. Hayunga, who brought him, deponent, in that condition to this colony. Does not know the date of his arrival, but knows that Baron Von Heckeren was the Governor of Surinam at the time. Deponent (Claver) remained as the slave of Mr. Hayunga until that functionary (who filled the office of President of the High Court of Justice) retired upon his pension, and quitted the colony finally for Holland, when deponent was sold, together with the other slaves, and became the property of Mr. Passavant, one of the Moravian missionaries. He likewise quitted the colony of Surinam, leaving deponent (Claver) for sale with one of the other missionaries, by whom deponent was sold to a person named Van Leenso; upon whose death he was again sold, and became the property of present owner, Dr. Conbyn, from whom deponent declares that he experiences great injustice and cruelty. Deponent (Claver) here exhibited his person, in a shocking state of laceration, from the effects of the recent infliction of the terrible punishment of the Spanish buck..."

John Claver's story is truly one of resistance and also survival of the conditions of slavery. He resisted and survived slavery in both the British and Dutch colonies. Mr. Schenley's efforts to secure Claver's freedom from Dutch enslavement, and recognize him as a British subject, is significant as it was an example of how one man tried and succeeded in securing the freedom of another. His humane and brotherly action is summed up in his declaration

"If my intervention can in any manner assist this course, I hereby declare, that I will willingly pay to the owner of Claver double the sum which he shall prove to have given for him; or that during the interval I will indemnify him for the loss of his services, by the hire of any two negroes of a similar class which he may choose to engage in the city."

The estate was originally owned by Joseph Estridge in the early 1700's. It was initially a 200-acre plantation. However, he increased the size of the plantation by 187 acres in 1727, when he purchased some French land. The estate was used for sugar cultivation with the aid of enslaved African labour. As a matter of fact, according to an 1819 inventory, there were 190 enslaved Africans working on the Estridge Estate. Early visitors to St. Christopher describe the estate as one of the richest and most magnificent. The following excerpt gives a good eyewitness description of the Estridge Estate in the 1800's and speaks to the contribution of the enslaved Africans:

“On an estate called Estridge, in the parish of Nicola Town, there is a magnificent avenue of cabbage palms, probably superior in arrangement, in luxuriance, and general effect, to any thing of the kind in the West Indies. They are planted equi-distant in double rows, extending nearly a quarter of a mile, from the sugar-works of the estate to the, to the spot where its owner formerly resided, and where four of these living Corinthian columns rear their lofty capitals round the site of the building. The works of the estate are very superior in construction. The boiling-house, curing-house, and distillery are all commodiously arranged under one roof, and the external appearance of the building, with its steeple, clock, &c., conveys a magnificent idea of the importance of the establishment, compared with most of the works on the island. The wind mill is also on a large scale; and the manager’s house, the hospital for the sick negroes, the extensive stores, tradesmen’s shops, stables, cattle pens, &c., indicate, not less distinctly, the great profits of a West Indian estate in times gone by.....” (Wentworth, 1835)

All this wonderful work was done by the enslaved Africans for no pay and for the sole benefit of the planters. It is important to note that the estate remained in the Estridge family's possession from the 18th to the 20th century until it was acquired by the government in the 1970s. At this point in time the Estridge Estate was finally owned by the descendants of the enslaved Africans who toiled on it over a century ago.

Authorities Consulted

Wentworth, Trelawney. ‘The West India Sketch Book, vol. I.’ (1835)

Golden Rock Estate

Location: St. Peter



Description: This was the estate where the official Declaration of Emancipation was read to the enslaved Africans. It is now the site of the international airport. The estate is historically linked to the liberty of the enslaved Africans. Thus, the present international airport is in itself symbolic of liberty.

Significance:

- Golden Rock Estate is a place of memory associated with the human rights of the enslaved Africans.
- It is also a place of memory associated with the liberty of the enslaved Africans.

Historical Background:

On 1st August, 1834, on the grounds of Golden Rock Estate, a large number of enslaved Africans were summoned and assembled to hear that their liberty was at hand. Golden Rock Estate is significant as it was the site where the human rights of the enslaved Africans to exist as free men and women under the protection of the laws of Great Britain. (Manchester, 1971), was proclaimed.

Authorities Consulted

Manchester, Catherine. 'Historic Heritage of St.Kitts, Nevis, Anguilla' (1971)





PRODUCTIVITY AND CONTRIBUTION



The strong and proud descendants of the enslaved Africans have inherited the very land that their ancestors toiled on. The contemporary people of St. Kitts and Nevis are the best and most significant contribution that the enslaved Africans made to these two islands.

The people of these islands provide evidence of the legacy of the Africans who once lived here under conditions of slavery. Another legacy of the enslaved Africans is their contribution to the built heritage and infrastructure of the two islands. Many of the structures built by the labour of the enslaved Africans have survived both the horrid era of slavery and natural disasters. They dot the landscape and act as time capsules bearing testimony to the contribution and productivity of the enslaved Africans.

The Brimstone Hill Fortress in St. Thomas Parish and Fort Charles in St. Anne Parish boast of magnificent stone workmanship and grandeur that is impressive even by today's advanced standards. In addition to building fortresses for military purposes, the enslaved Africans also constructed road networks, some of which were also for strategic military use. The Old Military Road in Old Road, St. Thomas, is one such road.

The Bath Hotel and Thermal Bath House in St. John Parish in Nevis were legendary then and still are amazing to behold even today. Du Poincy's Chateau in St. Peters Parish is not as well preserved as the aforementioned structures. However, its glory transcended the whole of the Caribbean and was the toast of France not just because of its fine workmanship, but, also because of the significance and fame of the owner – Governor Du Poincy.

There are also other buildings, constructed by the enslaved Africans, which assumed international significance because of events that occurred there, and the personalities associated with them. The Eden Brown Estate in Nevis is the site of 'The Legend of Eden Browne Estate'. In St. Paul's Parish in Nevis is the building in which Alexander Hamilton, the first treasurer of the United States of America, was born. The Fig Tree Anglican Church, houses the marriage certificate of history's most celebrated naval Admiral – Lord Nelson. The St. James' Anglican Church in St. James Parish is unique as it is one of but three churches in this part of the world with a black crucifix.

Finally, there are those places of memory that remind us of how the enslaved Africans used the rich soil of St. Kitts and Nevis and produced great wealth for their white masters. Estridge Estate and Spooners Estate are two excellent examples of such estates.



Cleverly Hill Fort (Fort Charles)

Location: Cleverly Hill, St. Anne.



A Small Section of the North Wall of Fort Charles

Description: A British Fort built by the enslaved Africans to protect the British town and harbour of Sandy Point. Built in 1678, it predates Brimstone Hill Fortress.

Significance:

Cleverly Hill Fort (Fort Charles) is place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. Enslaved Africans were used to construct and maintain the fort.

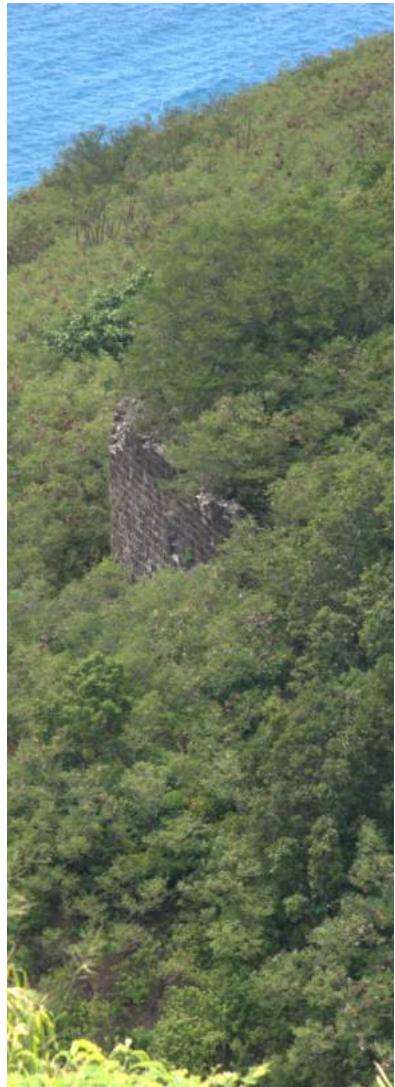
Historical Background:

Fort Charles was built circa 1678, and it was used as a deodand and as a protecting fort. It was named Fort Charles in honour of King Charles II. During two consecutive battles against the French, in 1682 and 1706, the fort was easily captured. It was only regained when the Governor ordered two 2400-lb cannons placed on top of Brimstone Hill, blasted the French, and recaptured the fort. This event proved two points: that Fort Charles was very vulnerable to enemy attack from the land above, and that Brimstone Hill was a more strategic vantage point for establishment of a defensive fort.

When Brimstone Hill was fortified circa 1690, Fort Charles, also known as Cleverly Hill Fort, was used less and less for battle. In 1890, Fort Charles was transformed into the Hansen Home, a Leper Asylum. The Fort was used a lepers' home for almost 100 years until its closure in the 1980's. The following is a description of what the fort looked like in the past.

The Fort is shaped like an irregular quadrilateral. The front curtain (a wall connecting two towers) is built on a low cliff above the beach. (Parts of this wall have collapsed into the sea). The curtain walls and bastions are made of rubble and earth and riveted (faced) on the outside by stone work. A ditch borders the three rear walls. The rear curtain has the entrance gate which is reached by a drawbridge. At the two ends of this rear curtain are two full bastions (walled fortifications projecting from a rampart) with a pair of embrasures (openings in the wall) to accommodate artillery in both their flanks. At the centre of each bastion are mounds called "grenadiers". There is a demi-bastion at each end of the front curtain where it joins the side curtains. There are a total of five embrasures in each demi-bastion.

The fort had a magazine (a place for storing ammunition), an arsenal, a guardroom, a small prison, a stone kitchen, a cistern and a freshwater well. One document says that the well within the fort had brackish water and that a well with good water was just outside the fort's walls. (Courtesy, S.C.N.T.)



Authorities Consulted

The St. Christopher National Trust

Old Military Road

Location: Old Road, St. Thomas



A Section of the Old Military Road above Old Road

Description: *A road that cut through the mountain range and connected the two English quarters of St. Kitts during colonial times.*

Significance:

The Old Military Road is place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. The Old Military Road was a very important communication network for the British Colonial settlers on St. Kitts. The fact that the road was constructed by the enslaved Africans demonstrates their productivity and significant contribution.

Historical Background:

This road was built by the British in the 17th century. It was constructed after the island of St. Christopher was divided between the British and the French. The French had the two ends of the island and the British occupied the middle portion. The central mountain range divides the windward and the leeward sides of St. Kitts. The Old Military road crosses between the central mountain range, from Old Road to Molyneaux via Phillips. Firstly, it allowed for expeditious communication between the windward and leeward factions of the British territory. Secondly, in times of war (and there were several between the French and the British), the British used this road to move troops strategically from one side of their territory to the other. (Courtesy of the St. Christopher National Trust)



Authorities Consulted

The St. Christopher National Trust



De Poincy's Chateau and Fountain Estate

Location: St. Peter



A 24 pounder Howitzer cannon at De Poincy's Estate

Description: This Chateau was the property of the flamboyant French governor Philippe de Lonvilliers de Poincy. The Chateau was also referred to as De Poincy's Castle, and as le Chateau de la Montagne. It was considered by many who saw it in its day as the most beautiful and luxurious in the West Indies. The Chateau also boasted a most elegant garden and a splendid orchard. An ingenious water system and fountain was integrated into the garden. This led to the estate being known as Fountain Estate.

Significance:

- De Poincy's Chateau is place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. Enslaved Africans helped to construct the sugar works – the sugar works on de Poincy's estate were of a different and more superior technology than others on the island. This underscores the construction skills these Angolans possessed. They planted and processed the many acres of sugarcane that brought great wealth to de Poincy, his Order, and his King. Apart from cultivating sugarcane, the enslaved Africans maintained de Poincy's famed garden and orchard. Though the aforementioned contributions of the enslaved Africans on de Poincy's Estate is very significant, their most celebrated accomplishment is their contribution to the construction of the magnificent Chateau de la Montagne.



Historical Background:

The following are two descriptions of the chateau from whence De Poincy governed the French West Indies. Though both accounts overlap regarding certain details, there are some facts present in one that are not present in the other. Having read both accounts, it can be surmised that, apart from being the most lavish and beautiful structure on the island of St. Christopher, the Chateau also served as:

a residence.

an economic unit (with the sugar mills and gardens).

a community reflecting the social order of the day.

a refuge in times of attack and defense positions with its cannon.

the official communication unit, as it was from there that important proclamations, such as French victories and public holidays, were announced. (Stapleton)

(17th century artist impression of De Poincy's chateau – source: National Archives, St.Kitts)

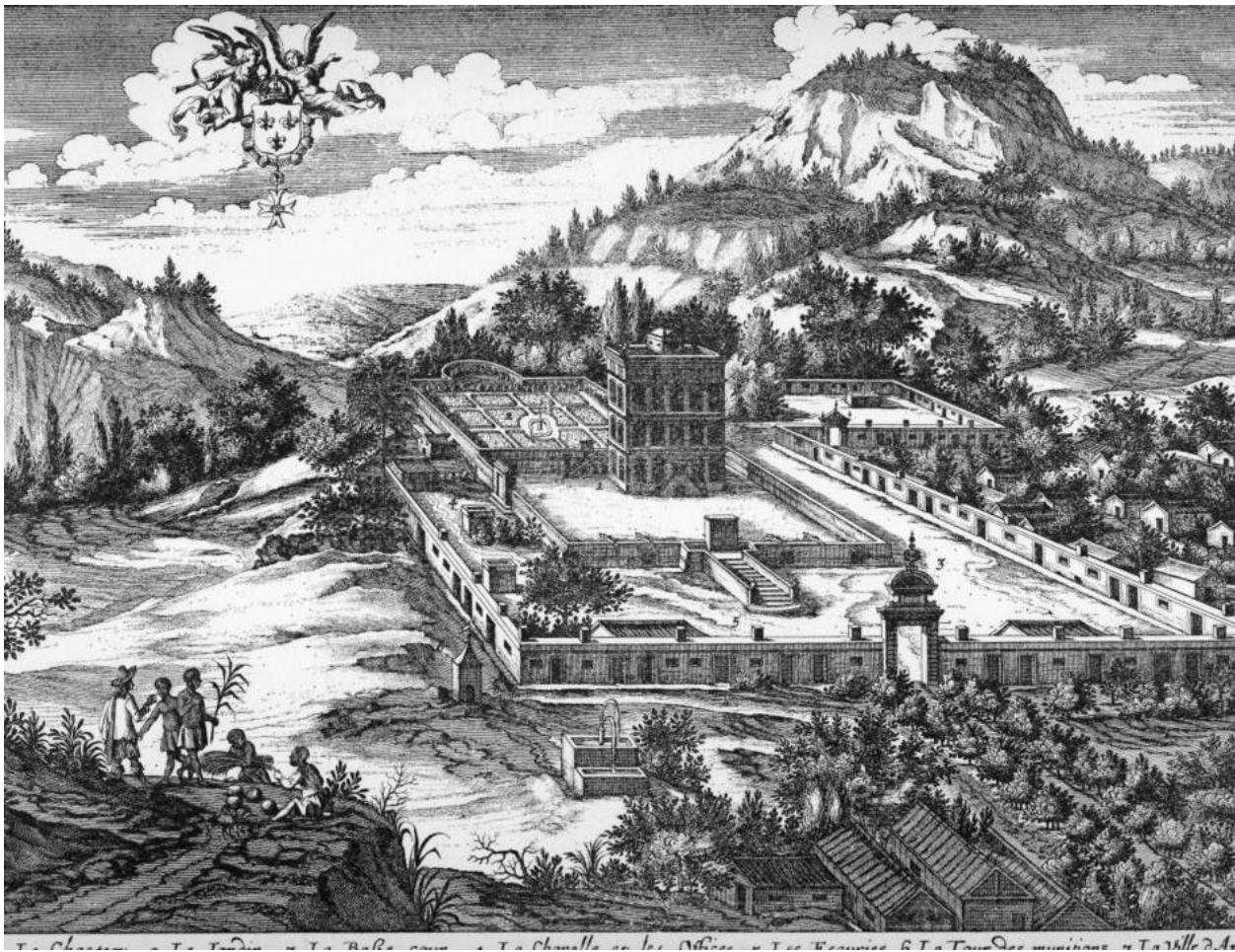
"De Poincy's Chateau, situated as it was in the foothills of 'La Montagne Ronde', was a continual source of surprise and wonder to visitors who were amazed by the size and good proportions of it, by the perennial green of the mountain behind and the magnificent view. It had the advantages of nature and of art. The temperature was ideal, and cool winds played through its rooms, even in the

heat of August.” (Brown, 1961).

“It is said that De Poincy had purchased the estate formerly belonging to Governor d’Esnambuc. It was a beautiful piece of property connected with Basseterre by a road lined with lemon and orange trees. De Poincy’s house, sometimes referred to as the chateau, was without exception the most pretentious dwelling on the island, or, for that matter, in the archipelago. Designed in the style of an English villa, it rose four stories to a height of thirty-six feet and was topped by a flat roof that served as an observation platform from which one could obtain a magnificent panorama of the southern portion of the island. Its shape was nearly square, about fifty feet on each side. Its walls were built of cut stone and brick. The front faced the east and overlooked the fertile valleys covered with sugarcane and ginger plants, while in the rear, was a large vegetable garden behind which rose the mountains, cutting off further view. A stream of clear water, skillfully brought down from its source in the hills, poured into a basin in the garden and furnished refreshment for the cattle of the neighbourhood, which would otherwise have died during the dry season. In front lay a broad terrace surrounded by a low wall, behind which were mounted several guns: for De Poincy regarded his house as a place of refuge in case of trouble. On one side of the chateau was d’Esnambuc’s former house converted into a chapel, while two brick buildings served as quarters for the servants. On the other side, at some distance from the mansion, was a settlement inhabited by the slaves of De Poincy, who numbered about three hundred. Altogether the establishment was intended to be a self-sufficient one, capable of supporting itself in case of an uprising.” (Crouse, Nellis M, 1940.)

The following account by Brown (1961) offers a more detailed description of the chateau. It is interesting to note how the two accounts differ with regards to the height of the chateau.





"The house, built from oblong red bricks and well cut stone, was almost square in outline, and was high, consisting of three storey. A double stairway led from the lower enclosed courtyard to the main entrance while a similar stairway at the rear of the house led up to a formal garden beyond which were the kitchen gardens. The flower garden was planted with rare and strange plants while the kitchen garden abounded with vegetables then common in France. In the middle of the garden, a clear, sparkling and refreshing fountain played. Indoors, all the rooms were airy, windows were many and well placed, while the floors, of French and local woods, were beautifully polished. All rooms, bedrooms and drawing rooms had beautiful views, those to the front of the house looked along the length of the avenue and away to small valleys planted with sugar cane and ginger, those to the rear overlooked another garden and upward to the mountain, while from the windows on each side of the house much of the island could be seen as well as courtyards and outer buildings, kitchen and quarters for the French household. The roof of the house was flat and from it could be seen (as early travelers thought) the most beautiful view in the world, overlooking as it did, the south-eastern peninsular of the island – hills interrupted by salt ponds, with the sea to either side and Mt. Nevis rising in the distance.

When French victories were announced and public holidays declared, bonfires were lit throughout the French lands and trumpets and clarion resounded from the Chateau roof, echoing and re-echoing down the valleys from the mountain slopes and well out into the sea. Hanging from the parapet of the roof and from the windows of the top storey were ensigns sprinkled with fleurs



de lys as well was flags and standards that the General had captured from the enemies.

On one side of the Chateau stood a beautiful Chapel (now only stones under bananas and breadfruit of the orchard) where Monsieur De Poincy's own chaplains, held services. A little below the chapel were the domestic offices, for members of the French household, and kitchens also built of brick, which on a slight incline, to the other side of the house, stood the quarters of the Negro slaves. These consisted of several small house made of timber and of brick making up what was known as "La Ville d'Angole" (Many of the first slaves entering the island having been brought from Angola by Portuguese traders, the name seems to have become attached to the negro slaves in general.)

The Chateau was extremely well fortified. As well as the outer wall, there was an inner wall, whose edge is marked by the long narrow chamber, entirely encircling the inner courtyards, house and gardens. De Poincy had installed many cannons and beyond the outer wall was an arsenal holding many types of arms and abundant supplies of powder, timber and canon balls. In the lower yard, within the outer walls, stood three wooden sugar mills used for crushing cane. These mills were more solid and more efficient than those to be seen in Madeira or in Brazil. The cauldrons were strong and fixed in such a manner that there was no sign of flames or smokes and they were so well controlled that here, there were no deaths from the burning as frequently happened in other countries where the fires blazed openly." (Brown, Audrey Leewards, 1961.)

Authorities Consulted

Brown, Audrey Leewards. 'Le Chateau de la Montagne, St. Christopher, Leeward Islands'. (1961)

Crouse, Nellis M. 'French Pioneers in the West Indies'. (1940)



Eden Browne Estate

Location: Eden Browne, St. James



Some of the ruins at Eden Brown Estate

Description: This particular sugar estate was the site of a most famous duel. The circumstances surrounding this duel have evolved into legend. The estate was owned by the Maynard Family during the time of the famous duel. There are still remains of some of the buildings which date back to that fateful period in the days of sugar and slavery.

Significance:

Eden Brown Estate is a place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. Enslaved Africans were used to construct the sugar works and also the living quarters of the estate owners. Great wealth was generated from the Eden Brown estate. This was made possible by the productivity and contributions of the enslaved Africans who cultivated, harvested and processed the lucrative sugar cane. Most significant however, is the fact that these Africans built an estate which became famous for a family that would become linked to a most fascinating, Shakespearean-style love story and tragedy.

Historical Background:



STORY BEHIND THE NAME EDEN BROWNE

In 1677, there were seven Browne families on Nevis. James Browne Senior, and another James Browne Junior, were probably the ones who gave the name to the property in St. James Parish, now known as Eden Browne Estate.

Before leaving for North America to seek a climate that he hoped would be more beneficial to his health, James Browne Junior, willed the estate to his widowed sister Elizabeth White, then living in Antigua, with the request that she take care of his mestee (born of a slave) children. Upon her brother's death in 1817, White sold the property to Edward Huggins who lost no time in moving his family onto the land which was situated next to the Maynard Estate at New River.

In 1774, the property was called "Browne's Estate", but in 1817 in the slave registry, Anne Hutton lists the place as "Eden" and in 1834, Edward Huggins, then owner, called it Eden Estate. One historian is convinced that the name "Eden" was not given to the estate until after the departure of the Brownes, and that the property became known as "Eden Browne". (Extracted from the St. Kitts and Nevis Visitor Magazine)

THE TRAGIC LOVE STORY OF EDEN BROWNE ESTATE

John Huggins, son of Edward Huggins, sugar planter, was to be best man at the wedding of his friend, Walter Maynard, son of a neighbouring planter, William Maynard.

Young Maynard who was to marry Julia Huggins on the day the duel was fought, had, so the story goes, flung his sangaree (drink) into his friend's face during the bachelor dinner which was held at New River Estate, one of those owned by the Maynard family, on the eve before the coming nuptials. The argument which caused the incident was supposedly over a slave. The Huggins were

known to be hard masters while the Maynards were reputed to be more kind and tolerant to their slaves.

Huggins challenged Maynard to a duel, and while everyone expected that the two hot-headed young men would fire their pistols in the air with their "honour" satisfied, instead they were both mortally wounded. Two families mourned their sons, and a feud began which lasted for many generations.

Julia, the bride? The legend says that she lost her mind and that one can hear her wails of sorrow and haunting cries for her slain lover echoing through the remaining walls of Eden Brown ruins. It has also been reported that Julia Huggins lived to be a very old lady who was quite "peculiar". She and her sister lived at Mount Travers Estate House, and despite the fact that they lived in the same house, a large and imposing edifice, the two old ladies met only once a week, for tea on Sunday afternoons.

After the duel, Eden Brown Mansion House was closed with its furnishings intact and left to the ravages of time, hurricanes and earthquake. Throughout the years, some of the furniture and other furnishings found their way into neighbouring huts.

The stone walls standing upright as a proof of the sound workmanship of those days, and the size of the Great House that the original owner, James Brown, planned, attest to why Mr. Brown called the Estate, "Brown's Eden". The magnificent view of the Atlantic is one of the finest in Nevis.

As one leaves, he notices the ruins of the old sugar mill and other buildings. He also notes the tomb which, we believe, is the burial site of the original owner. His epitaph reads, "Here lies James Brown, who departed this life on January 17th, and was here buried by his own order"

It is not known where the young antagonists were buried, but Miss Julia Huggins' tomb is in St. Thomas Lowlands graveyard.

Authorities Consulted

Nevis Historical and Conservation Society's article in the 'St. Kitts & Nevis Visitor Magazine'. Vol. 4, 1999-2000.



The final resting place of John Huggins, brother of Julia Huggins

Fig Tree Anglican Church

Location: Fig Tree, St. John



St. Johns Anglican Church holds the marriage certificate of Lord Nelson and Fanny Nisbet

Description: This church dates back to the sugar era. The church was constructed by enslaved Africans, and it stands as a symbol of their skill and productivity. The church's history is also linked to England's most famous captain, Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson. His wedding to Dame Fanny Nisbett is documented there. Their wedding certificate with original signatures is proudly displayed there.

Significance:

Fig Tree Anglican Church is a place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. It is a surviving testament to the skill and excellent workmanship of the enslaved Africans who built it. In this regard, the Fig Tree Anglican Church is a place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans.





Historical Background:

The Fig Tree or St. John Anglican Church dates back to the year 1710. This means that the skills and labour of the enslaved Africans contributed significantly to its construction. When the enslaved Africans were building this particular church, they had no idea that they were building the church that would be historically linked to the marriage of Britain's most famous and celebrated Admiral, – Lord Nelson. Lord Horatio Nelson married the widow Frances ‘Fannie’ Herbert Nisbet at nearby Montpellier Estate on March 11, 1787 (Hubbard, 1993). This grand event happened seventy years after the enslaved Africans built the church. Though the actual marriage ceremony between Lord Nelson and his Nevisian sweetheart, Fannie Nisbet, did not take place in the church, the marriage was certified there and the certificate of marriage is still housed therein.

Authorities Consulted

Hubbard, Vincent. ‘Swords, Ships and Sugar: A History of Nevis to 1900’. (1993)

St. James Anglican Church

Location: Pot Works, St. James



The St. James Anglican Church at Potworks Estate (close to Brick Kiln Village)

Description: The St. James' Anglican Church dates back to the slavery era. It is unique in that it is the only Anglican Church in the Federation with a statuary of a black Jesus Christ on the cross. In fact, there are only two other churches in the Caribbean with black crucifixes, one in Haiti and another in Trinidad.

Significance:

The building has been little changed since it was built about 1750. One feature that was installed, probably sometime in this century, is a black crucifix which has played a prominent part in the interest that has been focused on the church. As with the other Anglican Churches, a burial ground rests beside the church. The earliest grave dates from 1679 and there are graves markers in the floor of the church.





Shows the black crucifix in the St. James Anglican Church



Because of its age, we are assured that the church was built with slave labour. (Courtesy, the Nevis Archives)

Authorities Consulted

The Nevis Archives

Alexander Hamilton Birth Place

Location: Charlestown, St. Paul



The Birth Place of Alexander Hamilton

Description: This is the site where Alexander Hamilton was born. He later became chief architect of the American Constitution. He was also America's first treasurer.

Significance:

Alexander Hamilton's birthplace is place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. Enslaved Africans were used to construct the living quarters. They also served as nannies to the young Master Hamilton.





Historical Background:

Alexander Hamilton was born in Nevis on 11 January 1757, (according to some sources). The birth place of Alexander Hamilton was constructed by the enslaved Africans. However, though the buildings in and of themselves are testimony to the industriousness of the enslaved Africans, the real significance of the site is the fact that the man who would later become the first Secretary of the Treasury and chief architect and writer of the Constitution of the United States of America was born and bred within those very walls.

Authorities Consulted

Hubbard, Vincent. ‘Swords, Ships and Sugar: A History of Nevis to 1900’. (1993)



Spooner's Estate

Location: Spooner's Village, St. Mary



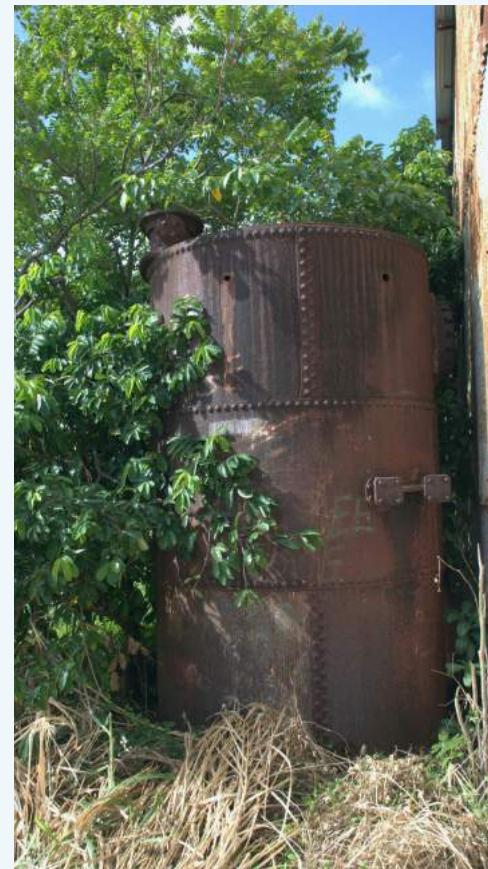
The old cotton ginnery and some of the sugar works at Spooners Estate

Description: An old sugar estate that produced only sugar in the days of slavery. It also produced cotton and cotton seed oil in later years. Presently there are ruins of the cotton ginnery and also remains of the steam-power technology.

Significance:

Spooners Estate is a place of memory associated with the productivity and contribution of the enslaved Africans. Enslaved Africans were used to construct the sugar works, as well as the living quarters. They also planted, harvested and processed the sugarcane. The wealth generated from Spooner's Estate was derived from the labour of the enslaved Africans.





Authorities Consulted

The St. Christopher National Trust: Mukti Documentation Centre



Afterword

The enslaved Africans had their human rights suppressed during the horrible era of slavery. Many resisted, rebelled, and died terrible deaths for their freedom and their rights. A special set of whites also sacrificed their social status and wealth to fight for the freedom and civil rights of the enslaved Africans. Now, many years later, Kittitians and Nevisians have the protection of their human rights enshrined in their constitution of their land. One must value freedom and human rights, and respect the rights and freedoms of others. One must be prepared to resist, rebel and, if needs be, die for his rights and the rights of his offspring, the rights of his people.

The enslaved Africans were considered the property of the planters. Everything the enslaved Africans produced from their labour was for the benefit and ownership of the planters. Yet, even under the condition of slavery (and knowing that their productivity will not be for the benefit of themselves or their children) the enslaved Africans produced magnificent edifices and immense wealth for their owners. The enslaved Africans, our ancestors, built roads, great-houses, sugar works, and magnificent fortresses which enriched the planters. They did not themselves benefit from the wealth their labour and skill generated. However, today their Kittitian and Nevisian descendants are free, they own what they produce and are compensated for their efforts. This insight and awareness should inspire all of us, Kittitians and Nevisians, especially the youth, to exert more effort, to be even more productive and to enrich ourselves a hundred times more than the enslaved Africans enriched the planters. We own the land and are more informed and skilled than our ancestors, therefore we can create wealth for ourselves. Our ancestors, the enslaved Africans who never had those rights and privileges, produced and created wealth for others. We can create wealth for ourselves today and in the future, as long as we have the will, the freedom and the land.

Having read 'Places of Memory', the reader should now look at these and other sites with fresh eyes. Our citizens will no longer look at the surviving structures as mere ruins, but as time capsules, for as they touch one of these structures or visit any one of these sites, they would in effect be reaching back across the centuries and touching the hands of their ancestors – their ancestors who cultivated the rich Kittitian and Nevisian soil, their ancestors who built these same structures that survived the ravages of time just as they survived the ravages of slavery. Having read 'Places of Memory', people should now have a greater sense of pride and personal attachment to their heritage. They will no longer engage in, condone or tolerate the stealing, destruction, or selling of these places of memory!

Leonard Stapleton





Primary Researcher and Writer

Leonard Stapleton is an Educator, Accountant and Historian. He has taught for over fifteen years at both the primary and secondary levels. For the past five years, he has been a part of the team that assesses and evaluates UWI teacher trainees in the areas of Geography, History, and Social Studies. One of his main passions is investigating and writing about the French heritage of the islands. He is currently the Deputy General Manager of the Brimstone Hill Fortress and Honorary Treasurer of the St. Christopher National Trust.

He is married, with three young children.